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SOME PASSAGES OF THE Life and Death Of the Right Honourable JOHN Earl of *ROCHESTER*, Who died the 26th of *July*, 1680.

Written by his own Direction on his Death-Bed,

By *Gilbert Burnet*, D. D.

LONDON,

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R. White sculp.

The Rgt Hon.ble Iohn Earle of Rochester
Baron Wilmot of Adderbury in
England, & Viscount Wilmot of Atholne
in Ireland. Born Ap. 1648 Died. 26 July. 1680.

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THE PREFACE.

THE Celebrating the Praiſes of the Dead, is an Argument ſo worn out by long and frequent uſe; and now become ſo nauſeous, by the flattery that uſually attends it, that it is no wonder if Funeral Orations, or Panegiricks, are more conſidered for the Elegancy of Style, and fineneſs of Wit, than for the Authority they carry with them as to the truth of matters of Fact. And yet I am not hereby deterred from medling with this kind of Argument, nor from

handling it with all the plainneſs I can: delivering only what I my ſelf heard and ſaw, without any borrowed Ornament. I do eaſily foreſee how many will be engaged for the ſupport of their Impious Maxims and Immoral Practices, to diſparage what I am to write. Others will cenſure it, becauſe it comes from one of my Profeſſion, too many ſuppoſing us to be induced, to frame ſuch Diſcourſes for carrying on what they are pleaſed to call Our Trade. *Some will think I dreſs it up too artificially, and others, that I preſent it too plain and naked.*

But being reſolved to govern my ſelf by the exact Rules of Truth; I ſhall be leſs concerned in the Cenſures I may fall under. It may ſeem liable to great Ex-

ception,

ception, that I ſhould diſcloſe ſo many things, that were diſcovered to me, if not under the Seal of Confeſſion, yet under the confidence of Friendſhip; But this Noble Lord himſelf not only releaſed me from all obligation of this kind, when I waited on him in his laſt Sickneſs, a few days before he died, but gave it me in Charge not to ſpare him in any thing which I thought might be of uſe to the Living; and was not ill pleaſed to be laid open, as well in the worſt as in the beſt and laſt part of his life, being ſo ſincere in his Repentance, that he was not unwilling to take ſhame to himſelf, by ſuffering his Faults to be expoſed for the benefit of others.

I write with one great diſadvantage, that I cannot reach his chief Deſign, without mentioning ſome of his Faults: But I have touched them as tenderly as the Occaſion would bear: and I am ſure with much more ſoftneſs than he deſired, or would have conſented unto, had I told him how I intended to manage this part. I have related nothing with perſonal reflections on any others, concerned with him, wiſhing rather that they themſelves reflecting on the ſenſe he had of his former Diſorders, may be thereby led to forſake their own; than that they ſhould be any ways Reproach'd by what I write: and therefore though he uſed very few Reſerves with me, as to his courſe of life, yet ſince others had a ſhare in moſt parts of it, I ſhall relate nothing

nothing but what more immediately concerned himſelf: and ſhall ſay no more of his faults, than is neceſſary to illuſtrate his Repentance.

The Occaſion that led me into ſo particular a knowledge of him, was an intimation given me by a Gentleman of his acquaintance, of his deſire to ſee me. This was ſometime in October, 1679. *when he was ſlowly recovering out of a great Diſeaſe. He had underſtood that I often attended on one well known to him, that died the Summer before; He was alſo then entertaining himſelf in that low ſtate of his health, with the firſt part of the* Hiſtory of the Reformation *then newly come out, with which he ſeemed not ill pleaſed: and we had accidentally met in two*

or three places ſometime before. Theſe were the Motives that led him to call for my Company. After I had waited on him once or twice, he grew into that freedom with me, as to open to me all his thoughts, both of Religion and Morality: and to give me a full view of his paſt life: and ſeemed not uneaſie at my frequent Viſits. So till he went from London, *which was in the beginning of* April, *I waited on him often. As ſoon as I heard how ill he was, and how much he was touched with the ſenſe of his former life, I writ to him, and received from him an Anſwer, that, without my knowledge, was printed ſince his Death; from a Copy which one of his Servants conveyed to the* Preſſe. *In it there is ſo undeſerved a Value*

put

put on me, that it had been very indecent for me to have publiſht it: Yet that muſt be attributed to his Civility and way of breeding: and indeed he was particularly known to ſo few of the Clergy, that the good Opinion he had of me, is to be imputed only to his unacquaintance with others.

My end of Writing is ſo to diſcharge the laſt Commands this Lord left on me, as that it may be effectual to awaken thoſe who run on to all the exceſſes of Riot; and that in the midſt of thoſe heats, which their Luſts and Paſſions raiſe in them, they may be a little wrought on by ſo great an Inſtance, of One who had run round the whole Circle of Luxury; *and as* Solomon

lomon *ſays of himſelf*, Whatſoever his Eyes deſired, he kept it not from them; and withheld his Heart from no Joy. *But when he looked back on all that on which he had waſted his Time and Strength, he eſteemed it* Vanity and Vexation of Spirit: *though he had both as much natural Wit, and as much acquired by Learning, and both as much improved with thinking and ſtudy, as perhaps any Libertine of the Age. Yet when he reflected on all his former Courſes, even before his Mind was illuminated with better thoughts, he counted them madneſs and folly. But when the Powers of Religion came to operate on him, then he added a deteſtation to the Contempt*

he

he formerly had of them, ſuitable to what became a ſincere Penitent, and expreſſed himſelf in ſo clear and ſo calm a manner, ſo ſenſible of his Failings towards his Maker and his Redeemer, that as it wrought not a little on thoſe that were about him; So, I hope, the making it Publick may have a more general Influence, chiefly on thoſe on whom his former Converſation might have had ill Effects.

I have endeavoured to give his Character as fully as I could take it: for I who ſaw him only in one light, in a ſedate and quiet temper, when he was under a great decay of Strength and loſs of Spirits, cannot give his Picture with that life and

advantage

advantage that others may, who knew him when his Parts were more bright and lively: Yet the Compoſure he was then in, may perhaps be ſuppoſed to ballance any abatement of his uſual Vigour which the declination of his Health brought him under. I have written this Diſcourſe with as much Care, and have conſidered it as narrowly as I could. I am ſure I have ſaid nothing but Truth; I have done it ſlowly, and often uſed my ſecond thoughts in it, not being ſo much concerned in the Cenſures might fall on my ſelf, as Cautious that nothing ſhould paſs, that might obſtruct my only deſign of writing, which is the doing what I can towards the reforming a looſe and lewd Age. And if ſuch a Signal

Inſtance

Inſtance concurring with all the Evidence that we have for our moſt holy Faith, has no effect on thoſe who are running the ſame Courſe, it is much to be feared they are given up to a reprobate ſenſe.

SOME

Errata.

PAge 15. line 14. for *too* read *to*, p. 27. l. 16. 17. dele *had a Stage, and* p. 108. l. 18. *from* r. *upon*.

(Corrected.)

SOME

PASSAGES

OF THE

Life and Death

OF

JOHN

Earl of *Rocheſter.*

John Wilmot Earl of *Rocheſter* was born in *April*, *Anno Dom.* 1648. his Father was *Henry* Earl of *Rocheſter*, but beſt known by the Title of the Lord

Wilmot, who bore ſo great a part in all the late Wars, that mention is often made of him in the Hiſtory: And had the chief ſhare in the Honour of the preſervation of his Majeſty that now Reigns, after *Worceſter* Fight, and the Conveying him from Place to Place, till he happily eſcaped into *France:* But dying before the King's Return, he left his Son little other Inheritance, but the Honour and Title derived to him, with the pretenſions ſuch eminent Services gave him to the Kings favour: Theſe were carefully managed by the great prudence and diſcretion of his Mother, a Daughter of that Noble and ancient Family of the *St. Johns* of *Wiltſhire*, ſo that his Education was carried

carried on in all things ſutably to his Quality.

When he was at School he was an extraordinary Proficient at his Book: and thoſe ſhining parts which have ſince appeared with ſo much luſtre; began then to ſhew themſelves: He acquired the *Latin* to ſuch perfection, that to his dying-day he retained a great relliſh of the fineneſs and Beauty of that Tongue: and was exactly verſed in the incomparable Authors that writ about *Auguſtus*'s time, whom he read often with that peculiar delight which the greateſt Wits have ever found in thoſe Studies.

When he went to the *Univerſity* the general Joy which over-ran the whole Nation upon his Majeſties Reſtauration,

but was not regulated with that Sobriety and Temperance, that became a serious gratitude to God for so great a Blessing, produced some of it's ill effects on him: He began to love these disorders too much; His Tutor was that Eminent and Pious Divine Dr. *Blanford*, afterwards promoted to the Sees of *Oxford* and *Worcester*: And under his Inspection, he was committed to the more immediate care of Mr. *Phineas Berry*, a Fellow of *Wadham*-Colledge, a very learned and good natured man; whom he afterwards ever used with much respect, and rewarded him as became a great man. But the humour of that time wrought so much on him, that he broke off the Course of his Studies; to which no means could

could ever effectually recall him; till when he was in *Italy* his Governor Dr. *Balfour* a learned and worthy man, now a Celebrated Phyſitian in *Scotland* his Native Country; drew him to read ſuch Books, as were moſt likely to bring him back to love Learning and Study: and he often acknowledged to me, in particular three days before his Death, how much he was obliged to Love and Honour this his Governour, to whom he thought he owed more than to all the World, next after his Parents, for his great Fidelity and Care of him, while he was under his truſt. But no part of it affected him more ſenſibly, than that he engaged him by many tricks (ſo he expreſſed it) to delight in

Books and reading; So that ever after he took occaſion in the Intervals of thoſe woful Extravagancies that conſumed moſt of his time to read much: and though the time was generally but indifferently employed, for the choice of the Subjects of his Studies was not always good, yet the habitual Love of Knowledge together with theſe fits of ſtudy, had much awakened his Underſtanding, and prepared him for better things, when his mind ſhould be ſo far changed as to relliſh them.

He came from his Travels in the 18*th* Year of his Age, and appeared at Court with as great Advantages as moſt ever had. He was a Graceful and well ſhaped Perſon, tall and well made,

made, if not a little too ſlender: He was exactly well bred, and what by a modeſt behaviour natural to him, what by a Civility become almoſt as natural, his Converſation was eaſie and obliging. He had a ſtrange Vivacity of thought, and vigour of expreſſion: His Wit had a ſubtility and ſublimity both, that were ſcarce imitable. His Style was clear and ſtrong: When he uſed Figures they were very lively, and yet far enough out of the Common Road: he had made himſelf Maſter of the Ancient and Modern Wit, and of the Modern *French* and *Italian* as well as the *Engliſh*. He loved to talk and write of Speculative Matters, and did it with ſo fine a thread, that even thoſe who hated the Subjects

that his Fancy ran upon, yet could not but be charmed with his way of treating of them. *Boileau* among the *French*, and *Cowley* among the *English* Wits, were those he admired most. Sometimes other mens thoughts mixed with his Compositures, but that flowed rather from the Impressions they made on him when he read them, by which they came to return upon him as his own thoughts; than that he servilely copied from any. For few men ever had a bolder flight of fancy, more steddily governed by Judgment than he had. No wonder a young man so made, and so improved was very acceptable in a Court.

Soon after his coming thither he laid hold on the first Occasion that offered to shew his readi-

ness

neſs to hazard his life in the Defence and Service of his Country. In *Winter* 1665. he went with the Earl of *Sandwich* to Sea, when he was ſent to lie for the *Dutch Eaſt-India Fleet*; and was in the *Revenge*, Commanded by Sir *Thomas Tiddiman*, when the Attack was made on the Port of *Bergen* in *Norway*, the *Dutch* Ships having got into that *Port*. It was as deſperate an Attempt as ever was made: during the whole Action, the Earl of *Rocheſter* ſhewed as brave and as reſolute a Courage as was poſſible: A Perſon of Honour told me he heard the Lord *Clifford*, who was in the ſame Ship, often magnifie his Courage at that time very highly. Nor did the Rigours of the Seaſon, the hard-

hardneſs of the Voyage, and the extream danger he had been in, deter him from running the like on the very next Occaſion; For the *Summer* following he went to Sea again, without communicating his deſign to his neareſt Relations. He went aboard the Ship Commanded by Sir *Edward Spragge* the day before the great Sea-fight of that Year: Almoſt all the Volunteers that were in the ſame Ship were killed. Mr. *Middleton* (brother to Sir *Hugh Middleton*) was ſhot in his Arms. During the Action, Sir *Edward Spragge* not being ſatisfied with the behaviour of one of the Captains, could not eaſily find a Perſon that would chearfully venture through ſo much danger, to carry his Commands to that Captain

Captain. This Lord offered himſelf to the Service; and went in a little Boat, through all the ſhot, and delivered his Meſſage, and returned back to Sir *Edward*: which was much commended by all that ſaw it. He thought it neceſſary to begin his life with theſe Demonſtrations of his Courage in an Element and way of fighting, which is acknowledged to be the greateſt trial of clear and undaunted Valour.

He had ſo entirely laid down the Intemperance that was growing on him before his Travels, that at his Return he hated nothing more. But falling into Company that loved theſe Exceſſes, he was, though not without difficulty, and by many ſteps, brought back to it again.

again. And the natural heat of his fancy, being inflamed by Wine, made him ſo extravagantly pleaſant, that many to be more diverted by that humor, ſtudied to engage him deeper and deeper in Intemperance: which at length did ſo entirely ſubdue him; that, as he told me, for five years together he was continually Drunk: not all the while under the viſible effect of it, but his blood was ſo inflamed, that he was not in all that time cool enough to be perfectly Maſter of himſelf. This led him to ſay and do many wild and unaccountable things: By this, he ſaid, he had broke the firm conſtitution of his Health, that ſeemed ſo ſtrong, that nothing was too hard for it; and he had ſuffered

ſo

ſo much in his Reputation, that he almoſt diſpaired to recover it. There were two Principles in his natural temper, that being heighten'd by that heat carried him to great exceſſes: a violent love of Pleaſure, and a diſpoſition to extravagant Mirth. The one involved him in great ſenſuality: the other led him to many odd Adventures and Frollicks, in which he was oft in hazard of his life. The one being the ſame irregular appetite in his Mind, that the other was in his Body, which made him think nothing diverting that was not extravagant. And though in cold blood he was a generous and good natured man, yet he would go far in his heats, after any thing that might turn to a Jeſt or matter

of

of Diverſion: He ſaid to me, He never improved his Intereſt at Court, to do a premeditate Miſchief to other perſons. Yet he laid out his Wit very freely in *Libels* and *Satyrs*, in which he had a peculiar Talent of mixing his Wit with his Malice, and fitting both with ſuch apt words, that Men were tempted to be pleaſed with them: from thence his Compoſures came to be eaſily known, for few had ſuch a way of tempering theſe together as he had; So that when any thing extraordinary that way came out, as a Child is fathered ſometimes by its Reſemblance, ſo was it laid at his Door as its Parent and Author.

Theſe Exerciſes in the courſe of his life were not always equally

equally pleaſant to him; he had often ſad Intervals and ſevere Reflections on them: and though then he had not theſe awakened in him from any deep Principle of Religion, yet the horrour that Nature raiſed in him, eſpecially in ſome Sicknesſes, made him too eaſie to receive ſome ill Principles, which others endeavoured to poſſeſs him with; ſo that he was too ſoon brought to ſet himſelf to ſecure, and fortifie his Mind againſt that, by diſpoſſeſſing it all he could of the belief or apprehenſions of Religion. The Licentiouſneſs of his temper, with the briskneſs of his Wit, diſpoſed him to love the Converſation of thoſe who divided their time between lewd Actions and irregular Mirth.

Mirth. And ſo he came to bend his Wit, and direct his Studies and Endeavours to ſupport and ſtrengthen theſe ill Principles both in himſelf and others.

An accident fell out after this, which confirmed him more in theſe Courſes: when he went to Sea in the Year 1665, there happened to be in the ſame Ship with him Mr. *Mountague* and another Gentleman of Quality, theſe two, the former eſpecially, ſeemed perſwaded that they ſhould never return into *England*. Mr. *Mountague* ſaid, He was ſure of it: the other was not ſo poſitive. The Earl of *Rocheſter*, and the laſt of theſe, entred into a formal Engagement, not without Ceremonies of Religion, that if either

either of them died, he ſhould appear, and give the other notice of the future State, if there was any. But Mr. *Mountague* would not enter into the Bond. When the day came that they thought to have taken the *Dutch*-Fleet in the Port of *Bergen*. Mr. *Mountague* though he had ſuch a ſtrong Preſage in his Mind of his approaching death, yet he generouſly ſtaid all the while in the place of greateſt danger: The other Gentleman ſignalized his Courage in a moſt undaunted manner, till near the end of the Action; when he fell on a ſudden into ſuch a trembling that he could ſcarce ſtand: and Mr. *Mountague* going to him to hold him up, as they were in each others Arms, a Can-

non Ball killed him outright, and carried away Mr. *Mountague*'s Belly, so that he died within an hour after. The Earl of *Rochester* told me that these presages they had in their minds made some impression on him, that there were separated Beings: and that the Soul either by a natural sagacity, or some secret Notice communicated to it, had a sort of Divination: But that Gentlemans never appearing was a great snare to him, during the rest of his life. Though when he told me this, he could not but acknowledge, it was an unreasonable thing for him, to think, that Beings in another State were not under such Laws and Limits, that they could not command their own motions, but

but as the Supream Power ſhould order them: and that one who had ſo corrupted the Natural Principles of Truth, as he had, had no reaſon to expect that ſuch an extraordinary thing ſhould be done for his Conviction.

He told me of another odd Preſage that one had of his approaching Death in the Lady *Warre*, his Mother in Laws houſe: The Chaplain had dream't that ſuch a day he ſhould die, but being by all the Family put out of the belief of it, he had almoſt forgot it: till the Evening before at Supper, there being Thirteen at Table; according to a fond conceit that one of theſe muſt ſoon die, One of the young Ladies pointed to him, that he was to

die. He remembring his Dream fell into ſome diſorder, and the Lady *Warre* reproving him for his Superſtition, he ſaid, He was confident he was to die before Morning, but he being in perfect health, it was not much minded. It was *Saturday*-Night, and he was to Preach next day. He went to his Chamber and ſate up late, as appeared by the burning of his Candle, and he had been preparing his Notes for his Sermon, but was found dead in his Bed the next Morning: Theſe things he ſaid made him inclined to believe, the Soul was a ſubſtance diſtinct from matter: and this often returned into his thoughts. But that which perfected his perſwaſion about it, was, that in the Sickneſs which

which brought him ſo near death before I firſt knew him, when his Spirits were ſo low and ſpent, that he could not move nor ſtir, and he did not think to live an hour; He ſaid, His Reaſon and Judgment were ſo clear and ſtrong, that from thence he was fully perſwaded that Death was not the ſpending or diſſolution of the Soul; but only the ſeparation of it from matter. He had in that Sickneſs great Remorſes for his paſt Life, but he afterwards told me, They were rather general and dark Horrours, than any Convictions of ſinning againſt God. He was ſorry he had lived ſo as to waſt his ſtrength ſo ſoon, or that he had brought ſuch an ill name upon himſelf, and had an Agony in

his Mind about it, which he knew not well how to expreſs: But at ſuch times, though he complied with his Friends in ſuffering Divines to be ſent for, he ſaid, He had no great mind to it: and that it was but a piece of his breeding, to deſire them to pray by him, in which he joyned little himſelf.

As to the Supream Being, he had always ſome Impreſſion of one: and profeſſed often to me, That he had never known an entire *Atheiſt*, who fully believed there was no God. Yet when he explained his Notion of this Being, it amounted to no more than a vaſt power, that had none of the Attributes of Goodneſs or Juſtice, we aſcribe to the Deity: Theſe were his thoughts about Religion,

gion, as himſelf told me. For Morality, he freely own'd to me, that though he talked of it, as a fine thing, yet this was only becauſe he thought it a decent way of ſpeaking, and that as they went always in Cloaths, though in their Frollicks they would have choſen ſometimes to have gone naked, if they had not feared the people: So though ſome of them found it neceſſary for humane life to talk of Morality, yet he confeſſed they cared not for it, further then the reputation of it was neceſſary for their credit, and affairs: of which he gave me many Inſtances, as their profeſſing and ſwearing Friendſhip, where they hated mortally; their Oaths and Imprecations in their Addreſſes to Wo-

men, which they intended never to make good; the pleaſure they took in defaming innocent Perſons, and ſpreading falſe Reports of ſome, perhaps in Revenge, becauſe they could not engage them to comply with their ill Deſigns: The delight they had in making people quarrel; their unjuſt uſage of their Creditors, and putting them off by any deceitful Promiſe they could invent, that might deliver them from preſent Importunity. So that in deteſtation of theſe Courſes he would often break forth into ſuch hard Expreſſions concerning himſelf as would be indecent for another to repeat.

Such had been his Principles and Practices in a Courſe of many years which had almoſt quite

quite extinguiſh't the natural Propenſities in him to Juſtice and Vertue: He would often go into the Country, and be for ſome months wholly imployed in Study, or the Sallies of his Wit: Which he came to direct chiefly to *Satyre*. And this he often defended to me; by ſaying there were ſome people that could not be kept in Order, or admoniſhed but in this way. I replied, That it might be granted that a grave way of *Satyre* was ſometimes no improfitable way of Reproof. Yet they who uſed it only out of ſpite, and mixed Lyes with Truth, ſparing nothing that might adorn their *Poems*, or gratifie their Revenge, could not excuſe that way of Reproach, by which the

the Innocent often suffer: since the most malicious things, if wittily expressed, might stick to and blemish the best men in the World, and the malice of a Libel could hardly consist with the Charity of an Admonition. To this he answered, A man could not write with life, unless he were heated by Revenge: For to make a *Satyre* without Resentments, upon the cold Notions of *Phylosophy*, was as if a man would in cold blood, cut mens throats who had never offended him: And he said, The lyes in these Libels came often in as Ornaments that could not be spared without spoiling the beauty of the *Poem*.

For his other Studies, they were divided between the Comical

mical and witty Writings of the Ancients and Moderns, the *Roman* Authors, and Books of Phyſick: which the ill ſtate of health he was fallen into, made more neceſſary to himſelf: and which qualifi'd him for an odd adventure, which I ſhall but juſt mention. Being under an unlucky Accident, which obliged him to keep out of the way; He diſguiſed himſelf, ſo that his neareſt Friends could not have known him, and ſet up in *Tower-ſtreet* for an *Italian Mountebank*, where he ~~had a Stage, and~~ practiſed Phyſick for ſome Weeks not without ſucceſs. In his later years, he read Books of Hiſtory more. He took pleaſure to diſguiſe himſelf, as a *Porter*, or as a *Beggar*; ſometimes to follow

ſome

ſome mean Amours, which, for the variety of them, he affected; At other times, meerly for diverſion, he would go about in odd ſhapes, in which he acted his part ſo naturally, that even thoſe who were on the ſecret, and ſaw him in theſe ſhapes, could perceive nothing by which he might be diſcovered.

I have now made the Deſcription of his former Life, and Principles, as fully as I thought neceſſary, to anſwer my End in Writing: And yet with thoſe reſerves, that I hope I have given no juſt cauſe of offence to any. I have ſaid nothing but what I had from his own mouth, and have avoided the mentioning of the more particular Paſſages of his life,

life, of which he told me not a few: But ſince others were concerned in them, whoſe good only I deſign, I will ſay nothing that may either provoke or blemiſh them. It is their Reformation, and not their Diſgrace, I deſire: This tender conſideration of others has made me ſuppreſs many remarkable and uſeful things, he told me: But finding that though I ſhould name none, yet I muſt at leaſt Relate ſuch Circumſtances, as would give too great Occaſion for the *Reader* to conjecture concerning the Perſons intended, right or wrong, either of which were inconvenient enough, I have choſen to paſs them quite over. But I hope thoſe that know how much they were engaged

engaged with him in his ill Courſes, will be ſomewhat touched with this tenderneſs I expreſs towards them: and be thereby the rather induced to reflect on their Ways, and to conſider without prejudice or paſſion what ſenſe this Noble Lord had of their caſe, when he came at laſt ſeriouſly to reflect upon his own.

I now turn to thoſe parts of this *Narrative*, wherein I my ſelf bore ſome ſhare, and which I am to deliver upon the Obſervations I made, after a long and free Converſation with him for ſome months. I was not long in his Company, when he told me, He ſhould treat me with more freedom than he had ever uſed to men of my Profeſſion. He would conceal

ceal none of his Principles from me, but lay his thoughts open without any Diſguiſe; nor would he do it to maintain Debate, or ſhew his Wit, but plainly tell me what ſtuck with him; and proteſted to me, That he was not ſo engaged to his old Maxims, as to reſolve not to change, but that if he could be convinc'd, he would chooſe rather to be of another mind; He ſaid, He would impartially Weigh what I ſhould lay before him, and tell me freely when it did convince him, and when it did not. He expreſſed this diſpoſition of mind to me in a manner ſo frank, that I could not but believe him, and be much taken with his way of Diſcourſe: So we entred into almoſt all the parts of Natural and

and Revealed Religion, and of Morality. He ſeemed pleaſed, and in a great meaſure ſatisfied, with what I ſaid upon many of theſe Heads: And though our freeſt Converſation was when we were alone, yet upon ſeveral Occaſions, other perſons were Witneſſes to it. I underſtood from many hands that my Company was not diſtaſtful to him, and that the Subjects about which we talked moſt were not unacceptable: and he expreſſed himſelf often, not ill pleaſed with many things I ſaid to him, and particularly when I viſited him in his laſt Sickneſs, ſo that I hope it may not be altogether unprofitable to publiſh the ſubſtance of thoſe matters about which We argued ſo freely, with our reaſoning upon them:

them: And perhaps what had ſome effects on him, may be not altogether ineffectual upon others. I followed him with ſuch Arguments as I ſaw were moſt likely to prevail with him: and my not urging other Reaſons, proceeded not from any diſtruſt I had of their force, but from the neceſſity of uſing thoſe that were moſt proper for him. He was then in a low ſtate of health, and ſeemed to be ſlowly recovering of a great Diſeaſe: He was in the Milk-Diet, and apt to fall into Hectical-Fits; any accident weakened him; ſo that he thought he could not live long; And when he went from *London*, he ſaid, He believed he ſhould never come to Town more. Yet during his being in Town

he was ſo well, that he went often abroad, and had great Vivacity of Spirit. So that he was under no ſuch decay, as either darkened or weakened his Underſtanding; Nor was he any way troubled with the Spleen, or Vapours, or under the power of Melancholy. What he was then, compared to what he had been formerly, I could not ſo well judge, who had ſeen him but twice before. Others have told me they perceived no difference in his parts. This I mention more particularly, that it may not be thought that Melancholy, or the want of Spirits, made him more inclined to receive any Impreſſions: for indeed I never diſcovered any ſuch thing in him.

Having

Having thus opened the way to the Heads of our Diſcourſe, I ſhall next mention them. The *three* chief things We talked about, were *Morality*, *Natural Religion* and *Revealed Religion*, *Chriſtianity* in particular. For *Morality*, he confeſſed, He ſaw the neceſſity of it, both for the Government of the World, and for the preſervation of Health, Life and Friendſhip: and was very much aſhamed of his former Practices, rather becauſe he had made himſelf a Beaſt, and had brought pain and ſickneſs on his Body, and had ſuffered much in his Reputation, than from any deep ſenſe of a Supream being, or another State: But ſo far this went with him, that he reſolved firmly to change the Courſe of

his Life; which he thought he ſhould effect by the ſtudy of *Philoſophy*, and had not a few no leſs ſolid than pleaſant Notions concerning the folly and madneſs of Vice: but he confeſſed he had no remorſe for his paſt Actions, as Offences againſt God, but only as Injuries to himſelf and to Mankind.

Upon this Subject I ſhewed him the Defects of *Philoſophy*, for reforming the World: That it was a matter of Speculation, which but few either had the leiſure, or the capacity to enquire into. But the Principle that muſt reform Mankind, muſt be obvious to every Mans Underſtanding. That *Philoſophy* in matters of Morality, beyond the great lines of our Duty, had no very certain fixed Rule,

Rule, but in the leſſer Offices and Inſtances of our Duty went much by the Fancies of Men, and Cuſtoms of Nations; and conſequently could not have Authority enough to bear down the Propenſities of Nature, Appetite or Paſſion: For which I inſtanced in theſe two Points; The *One* was, About that *Maxim* of the *Stoicks*, to extirpate all ſort of Paſſion and concern for any thing. That, take it by one hand, ſeemed deſireable, becauſe if it could be accompliſh'd, it would make all the accidents of life eaſie; but I think it cannot, becauſe Nature after all our ſtriving againſt it, will ſtill return to it ſelf: Yet on the other hand it diſſolved the Bonds of Nature and Friendſhip, and ſlackened In-

duſtry which will move but dully, without an inward heat: And if it delivered a man from many Troubles, it deprived him of the chief pleaſures of Life, which riſe from Friendſhip. The *other* was concerning the reſtraint of pleaſure, how far that was to go. Upon this he told me the two *Maxims* of his *Morality* then were, that he ſhould do nothing to the hurt of any other, or that might prejudice his own health: And he thought that all pleaſure, when it did not interfere with theſe, was to be indulged as the gratification of our natural Appetites. It ſeemed unreaſonable to imagine theſe were put into a man only to be reſtrained, or curbed to ſuch a narrowneſs: This he applied to the free

free uſe of Wine and Women.

To this I anſwered, That if Appetites being Natural, was an Argument for the indulging them, then the revengeful might as well alledge it for Murder, and the Covetous for ſtealing; whoſe Appetites are no leſs keen on thoſe Objects; and yet it is acknowledg'd that theſe Appetites ought to be curb'd. If the difference is urged from the Injury that another Perſon receives, the Injury is as great, if a Mans Wife is defiled, or his Daughter corrupted: and it is impoſſible for a man to let his Appetites looſe to Vagrant Luſts, and not to tranſgreſs in theſe particulars: So there was no curing the Diſorders, that muſt riſe from

thence, but by regulating theſe Appetites: And why ſhould we not as well think that God intended our bruitiſh and ſenſual Appetites ſhould be governed by our Reaſon, as that the fierceneſs of Beaſts ſhould be managed and tamed, by the Wiſdom, and for the uſe of Man? So that it is no real abſurdity to grant that Appetites were put into Men, on purpoſe to exerciſe their Reaſon in the Reſtraint and Government of them: which to be able to do, Miniſters a higher and more laſting pleaſure to a Man, than to give them their full ſcope and range. And if other Rules of *Philoſophy* be obſerved, ſuch as the avoiding thoſe Objects that ſtir Paſſion; Nothing raiſes higher Paſſions than ungo-

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vern'd Luſt, nothing darkens the Underſtanding, and depreſſes a mans mind more, nor is any thing managed with more frequent Returns of other Immoralities, ſuch as Oaths and Imprecations which are only intended to compaſs what is deſired: The expence that is neceſſary to maintain theſe Irregularities makes a man falſe in his other dealings. All this he freely confeſſed was true, Upon which I urged, that if it was reaſonable for a man to regulate his Appetite in things which he knew were hurtful to him; Was it not as reaſonable for God to preſcribe a Regulating of thoſe Appetites, whoſe unreſtrained Courſe did produce ſuch miſchievous effects. That it could not be denied, but

but doing to others what we would have others do unto us, was a just Rule: Those men then that knew how extream sensible they themselves would be of the dishonour of their Families in the case of their Wives or Daughters, must needs condemn themselves, for doing that which they could not bear from another: And if the peace of Mankind, and the entire satisfaction of our whole life, ought to be one of the chief measures of our Actions, then let all the World judge, Whether a Man that confines his Appetite, and lives contented at home, is not much happier, than those that let their Desires run after forbidden Objects. The thing being granted to be better in it self, than the question falls

falls between the reſtraint of Appetite in ſome Inſtances, and the freedom of a mans thoughts, the ſoundneſs of his health, his application to Affairs, with the eaſineſs of his whole life. Whether the one is not to be done before the other? As to the difficulty of ſuch a reſtraint, though it is not eaſie to be done, when a man allows himſelf many liberties, in which it is not poſſible to ſtop; Yet thoſe who avoid the Occaſions that may kindle theſe impure Flames, and keep themſelves well employed, find the Victory and Dominion over them no ſuch impoſſible, or hard matter, as may ſeem at firſt view. So that though the *Philoſophy* and *Morality* of this Point were plain; Yet there is

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not ſtrength enough in that Principle to ſubdue Nature, and Appetite. Upon this I urged, that *Morality* could not be a ſtrong thing, unleſs a man were determined by a Law within himſelf: for if he only meaſured himſelf by Decency, or the Laws of the Land, this would teach him only to uſe ſuch caution in his ill Practices, that they ſhould not break out too viſibly: but would never carry him to an inward and univerſal probity: That Vertue was of ſo complicated a Nature, that unleſs a man came entirely within its diſcipline, he could not adhere ſtedfaſtly to any one Precept: for Vices are often made neceſſary ſupports to one another. That this cannot be done, either ſteddily, or with any ſatisfaction,

faction, unleſs the Mind does inwardly comply with, and delight in the Dictates of Virtue. And that could not be effected, except a mans nature were internally regenerated, and changed by a higher Principle: Till that came about, corrupt Nature would be ſtrong, and *Philoſophy* but feeble: eſpecially when it ſtrugled with ſuch Appetites or Paſſions as were much kindled, or deeply rooted in the Conſtitution of ones Body. This, he ſaid, ſounded to him like *Enthuſiaſme*, or *Canting*: He had no notion of it, and ſo could not underſtand it: He comprehended the Dictates of *Reaſon* and *Philoſophy*, in which as the Mind became much converſant, there would ſoon follow as he believed, a greater

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easiness in obeying its precepts: I told him on the other hand, that all his Speculations of *Philosophy* would not serve him in any stead, to the reforming of his Nature and Life, till he applied himself to God for inward assistances. It was certain, that the Impressions made in his Reason governed him, as they were lively presented to him: but these are so apt to slip out of our Memory, and we so apt to turn our thoughts from them, and at some times the contrary Impressions are so strong, that let a man set up a reasoning in his Mind against them, he finds that Celebrated saying of the Poet,

Video

Video meliora proboq; deteriora, ſequor.

I ſee what is better and approve it: but follow what is worſe.

to be all that *Philoſophy* will amount to. Whereas thoſe who upon ſuch Occaſions apply themſelves to God, by earneſt Prayer, feel a diſengagement from ſuch Impreſſions, and themſelves endued with a power to reſiſt them. So that thoſe bonds which formerly held them, fall off.

This he ſaid muſt be the effect of a heat in Nature: it was only the ſtrong diverſion of the thoughts, that gave the ſeeming Victory, and he did not doubt but if one could turn

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to a *Problem* in *Euclid*, or to Write a Copy of Verſes, it would have the ſame effect. To this I anſwered, That if ſuch Methods did only divert the thoughts, there might be ſome force in what he ſaid: but if they not only drove out ſuch Inclinations, but begat Impreſſions contrary to them, and brought men into a new diſpoſition and habit of mind; then he muſt confeſs there was ſomewhat more than a diverſion, in theſe changes, which were brought on our minds by true Devotion. I added, that Reaſon and Experience were the things that determined our perſwaſions: that Experience without Reaſon may be thought the deluſion of our Fancy, ſo Reaſon without Experience

perience had not ſo convincing an Operation: But theſe two meeting together, muſt needs give a man all the ſatisfaction he can deſire. He could not ſay, It was unreaſonable to believe that the Supream Being might make ſome thoughts ſtir in our Minds with more or leſs force, as it pleaſed: Eſpecially the force of theſe motions, being, for moſt part, according to the Impreſſion that was made on our Brains: which that power that directed the whole frame of Nature, could make grow deeper as it pleaſed. It was alſo reaſonable to ſuppoſe God a Being of ſuch goodneſs that he would give his aſſiſtance to ſuch as deſired it: For though he might upon ſome greater Occaſions in an

extraordinary manner turn ſome peoples minds; Yet ſince he had endued Man with a faculty of Reaſon, it is fit that men ſhould employ that, as far as they could; and beg his aſſiſtance: which certainly they can do. All this ſeemed reaſonable, and at leaſt probable: Now good men who felt upon their frequent Applications to God in prayer, a freedom from thoſe ill Impreſſions, that formerly ſubdued them, an inward love to Vertue and true Goodneſs, an eaſineſs and delight in all the parts of Holineſs, which was fed and cheriſhed in them by a ſeriouſneſs in Prayer, and did languiſh as that went off, had as real a perception of an inward ſtrength in their Minds, that did riſe and fall with true

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Devotion, as they perceived the ſtrength of their Bodies increaſed or abated, according as they had or wanted good nouriſhment.

After many Diſcourſes upon this Subject, he ſtill continued to think all was the effect of Fancy: He ſaid, That he underſtood nothing of it, but acknowledged that he thought they were very happy whoſe Fancies were under the power of ſuch Impreſſions; ſince they had ſomewhat on which their thoughts reſted and centred: But when I ſaw him in his laſt Sickneſs, he then told me, He had another ſenſe of what we had talked concerning prayer and inward aſſiſtances.

This Subject led us to diſcourſe of God, and of the

Notion of Religion in general. He believed there was a Supream Being: He could not think the World was made by chance, and the regular Courſe of Nature ſeemed to demonſtrate the Eternal Power of its Author. This, he ſaid, he could never ſhake off; but when he came to explain his Notion of the Deity, he ſaid, He looked on it as a vaſt Power that wrought every thing by the neceſſity of its Nature: and thought that God had none of thoſe Affections of Love or Hatred, which breed perturbation in us, and by conſequence he could not ſee that there was to be either reward or puniſhment. He thought our Conceptions of God were ſo low, that we had better not

think

think much of him: And to love God ſeemed to him a preſumptuous thing, and the heat of fanciful men. Therefore he believed there ſhould be no other Religious Worſhip, but a general Celebration of that Being, in ſome ſhort Hymn: All the other parts of Worſhip he eſteemed the Inventions of Prieſts, to make the World believe they had a Secret of Incenſing and Appeaſing God as they pleaſed. In a word, he was neither perſwaded that there was a ſpecial Providence about humane Affairs; Nor that Prayers were of much uſe, ſince that was to look on God as a weak Being, that would be overcome with Importunities. And for the ſtate after death, though he thought the Soul

did not diſſolve at death; Yet he doubted much of Rewards or Puniſhments: the one he thought too high for us to attain, by our ſlight Services; and the other was too extream to be inflicted for Sin. This was the ſubſtance of his Speculations about God and Religion.

I told him his Notion of God was ſo low, that the Supream Being ſeemed to be nothing but Nature. For if that being had no freedom, nor choice of its own Actions, nor operated by Wiſdom or Goodneſs, all thoſe Reaſons which lead him to acknowledge a God, were contrary to this Conceit; for if the Order of the Univerſe perſwaded him to think there was a God, He muſt at the ſame time

time conceive him to be both Wiſe and Good, as well as powerful, ſince theſe all appear'd equally in the Creation: though his Wiſdom and Goodneſs had ways of exerting themſelves, that were far beyond our Notions or Meaſures. If God was Wiſe and Good, he would naturally love, and be pleaſed with thoſe that reſembled him in theſe Perfections, and diſlike thoſe that were oppoſite to him. Every Rational Being naturally loves it ſelf, and is delighted in others like it ſelf, and is averſe from what is not ſo. Truth is a Rational Natures acting in conformity to it ſelf in all things, and Goodneſs is an Inclination to promote the happineſs of other Beings: So Truth and

Goodneſs were the eſſential perfections of every reaſonable Being, and certainly moſt eminently in the Deity: nor does his Mercy or Love raiſe Paſſion or Perturbation in Him; for we feel that to be a weakneſs in our ſelves, which indeed only flows from our want of power, or skill to do what we wiſh or deſire: It is alſo reaſonable to believe God would aſſiſt the Endeavours of the Good, with ſome helps ſuitable to their Nature. And that it could not be imagined, that thoſe who imitated him, ſhould not be ſpecially favoured by him: and therefore ſince this did not appear in this State, it was moſt reaſonable to think it ſhould be in another, where the Rewards

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ſhall be an admiſſion to a more perfect State of Conformity to God, with the felicity that follows it, and the Puniſhments ſhould be a total excluſion from him, with all the horrour and darkneſs that muſt follow that. Theſe ſeemed to be the natural Reſults of ſuch ſeveral Courſes of life, as well as the Effects of Divine Juſtice, Rewarding or puniſhing. For ſince he believed the Soul had a diſtinct ſubſiſtance, ſeparated from the Body; Upon its diſſolution there was no reaſon to think it paſſed into a State of utter Oblivion, of what it had been in formerly: but that as the reflections on the good or evil it had done, muſt raiſe joy or horrour in it; So thoſe good or ill Diſpoſitions accompanying

ing the departed Souls, they must either rise up to a higher Perfection, or sink to a more depraved, and miserable State. In this life variety of Affairs and objects do much cool and divert our Minds; and are on the one hand often great temptations to the good, and give the bad some ease in their trouble; but in a State wherein the Soul shall be separated from sensible things, and employed in a more quick and sublime way of Operation, this must very much exalt the Joys and Improvements of the good, and as much heighten the horrour and rage of the Wicked. So that it seemed a vain thing to pretend to believe a Supream Being, that is Wise and Good as well as great, and not to think

think a diſcrimination will be made between the Good and Bad, which, it is manifeſt, is not fully done in this life.

As for the Government of the World, if We believe the Supream Power made it, there is no reaſon to think he does not govern it: For all that we can fancy againſt it, is the diſtraction which that Infinite Variety of Second Cauſes, and the care of their Concernments, muſt give to the firſt, if it inſpects them all. But as among men, thoſe of weaker Capacities are wholly taken up with ſome one thing, whereas thoſe of more enlarged powers can, without diſtraction, have many things within their care, as the Eye can at one view receive a great Variety of Objects, in that narrow Compaſs, without

without confusion; So if we conceive the Divine Understanding to be as far above ours, as his Power of creating and framing the whole Universe, is above our limited activity; We will no more think the Government of the World a distraction to him: and if we have once overcome this prejudice, We shall be ready to acknowledge a Providence directing all Affairs; a care well becoming the Great Creator.

As for Worshipping Him, if we imagine Our Worship is a thing that adds to his happiness, or gives him such a fond Pleasure as weak people have to hear themselves commended; or that our repeated Addresses do overcome Him through our meer Importunity, We have cer-

certainly very unworthy thoughts of him. The true ends of Worſhip come within another conſideration: which is this, A man is never entirely Reformed, till a new Principle governs his thoughts: Nothing makes that Principle ſo ſtrong, as deep and frequent Meditations of God; whoſe Nature though it be far above our Comprehenſion, yet his Goodneſs and Wiſdom are ſuch Perfections as fall within our Imagination: And he that thinks often of God, and conſiders him as governing the World, and as ever obſerving all his Actions, will feel a very ſenſible effect of ſuch Meditations, as they grow more lively and frequent with him; ſo the end of Religious Worſhip either publick

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or private, is to make the Apprehenſions of God, have a deeper root and a ſtronger influence on us. The frequent returns of theſe are neceſſary: Leſt if we allow of too long intervals between them, theſe Impreſſions may grow feebler, and other Suggeſtions may come in their room: And the Returns of Prayer are not to be conſidered as Favours extorted by meer Importunity, but as Rewards conferred on men ſo well diſpoſed, and prepared for them: according to the Promiſes that God has made, for anſwering our Prayers: thereby to engage and nouriſh a devout temper in us, which is the chief root of all true Holineſs and Vertue.

It is true we cannot have ſuitable Notions of the Divine Eſſence; as indeed we have no juſt *Idea* of any Eſſence whatſoever: Since we commonly conſider all things, either by their outward Figure, or by their Effects: and from thence make Inferences what their Nature muſt be. So though we cannot frame any perfect Image in our Minds of the Divinity, Yet we may from the Diſcoveries God has made of Himſelf, form ſuch Conceptions of Him, as may poſſeſs our Minds with great Reverence for Him, and beget in us ſuch a Love of thoſe Perfections as to engage us to imitate them. For when we ſay we love God; the meaning is, We love that Being that is Holy,

Holy, Just, Good, Wise; and infinitely perfect: And loving these Attributes in that Object, will certainly carry us to desire them in our selves. For what ever We love in another, We naturally, according to the degree of our love, endeavour to resemble it. In sum, the Loving and Worshipping God, though they are just and reasonable returns and expressions of the sense we have of his Goodness to us; Yet they are exacted of us not only as a Tribute to God, but as a mean to beget in us a Conformity to his Nature, which is the chief end of pure and undefiled Religion.

If some Men, have at several times, found out Inventions to Corrupt this, and cheat the World;

World; It is nothing but what occurs in every ſort of Employment, to which men betake themſelves. *Mountebanks* Corrupt Phyſick; *Petty-Foggers* have entangled the matters of Property; and all Profeſſions have been vitiated by the Knaveries of a number of their Calling.

With all theſe Diſcourſes he was not equally ſatisfied: He ſeemed convinced that the Impreſſions of God being much in Mens minds, would be a powerful means to reform the World: and did not ſeem determined againſt Providence; But for the next State, he thought it more likely that the Soul began anew, and that her ſenſe of what ſhe had done in this Body, lying in the figures

that are made in the Brain, as soon as she dislodged, all these perished, and that the Soul went into some other State to begin a new Course. But I said on this Head, That this was at best a conjecture, raised in him by his fancy: for he could give no reason to prove it true; Nor was all the remembrance our Souls had of past things seated in some material figures lodged in the Brain: Though it could not be denied but a great deal of it lay in the Brain. That we have many abstracted Notions and *Idea's* of immaterial things which depends not on bodily Figures: Some Sins, such as Falshood, and ill Nature were seated in the Mind, as Lust and Appetite were in the Body: And as the whole Body

was

was the Receptacle of the Soul, and the Eyes and Ears were the Organs of Seeing and Hearing, ſo was the Brain the Seat of Memory: Yet the power and faculty of Memory, as well as of Seeing and Hearing, lay in the Mind: and ſo it was no unconceivable thing that either the Soul by its own ſtrength, or by the means of ſome ſubtiler Organs, which might be fitted for it in another ſtate, ſhould ſtill remember as well as think. But indeed We know ſo little of the Nature of our Souls, that it is a vain thing for us to raiſe an *Hypotheſis* out of the conjectures We have about it, or to reject one, becauſe of ſome difficulties that occur to us; ſince it is as hard to underſtand how we remember things now,

as how We ſhall do it in another State; only we are ſure we do it now, and ſo we ſhall be then, when we do it.

When I preſſed him with the ſecret Joys that a good Man felt, particularly as he drew near Death, and the Horrours of ill men eſpecially at that time; He was willing to aſcribe it to the Impreſſions they had from their Education: But he often confeſſed, that whether the buſineſs of Religion was true or not, he thought thoſe who had the perſwaſions of it, and lived ſo that they had quiet in their Conſciences, and believed God governed the World, and acquieſced in his Providence, and had the hope of an endleſs bleſſedneſs in another State, the happieſt men in

in the World: And ſaid, He would give all that he was Maſter of, to be under thoſe Perſwaſions, and to have the Supports and Joys that muſt needs flow from them. I told him the main Root of all Corruptions in Mens Principles was their ill life; Which as it darkened their Minds, and diſabled them from diſcerning better things; ſo it made it neceſſary for them to ſeek out ſuch Opinions as might give them eaſe from thoſe Clamours, that would otherwiſe have been raiſed within them: He did not deny but that after the doing of ſome things he felt great and ſevere Challenges within himſelf; But he ſaid, He felt not theſe after ſome others which I would perhaps call far greater

Sins, than thoſe that affected him more ſenſibly: This I ſaid, might flow from the Diſorders he had caſt himſelf into, which had corrupted his judgment, and vitiated his taſt of things; and by his long continuance in, and frequent repeating of ſome Immoralities, he had made them ſo familiar to him, that they were become as it were natural: And then it was no wonder if he had not ſo exact a ſenſe of what was Good or Evil; as a Feaveriſh man cannot judge of Taſts.

He did acknowledge the whole Syſteme of Religion, if believed, was a greater foundation of quiet than any other thing whatſoever: for all the quiet he had in his mind, was, that he could not think ſo good a Being

a Being as the Deity would make him miſerable. I asked if when by the ill courſe of his life he had brought ſo many Diſeaſes on his Body, he could blame God for it: or expect that he ſhould deliver him from them by a Miracle. He confeſſed there was no reaſon for that: I then urged, that if Sin ſhould caſt the mind by a natural Effect, into endleſs Horrours and Agonies, which being ſeated in a Being not ſubject to Death, muſt laſt for ever, unleſs ſome Miraculous Power interpoſed, could he accuſe God for that which was the effect of his own choice and ill life.

He ſaid, They were happy that believed: for it was not in every mans power.

And upon this we diſcourſed

long about *Revealed Religion.* He said, He did not understand that business of Inspiration; He believed the Pen-men of the Scriptures had heats and honesty, and so writ: but could not comprehend how God should reveal his Secrets to Mankind. Why was not Man made a Creature more disposed for Religion, and better Illuminated? He could not apprehend how there should be any corruption in the Nature of Man, or a Lapse derived from *Adam.* Gods communicating his Mind to one Man, was the putting it in his power to cheat the World: For Prophesies and Miracles, the World had been always full of strange Stories; for the boldness and cunning of Contrivers meeting with the Simplicity

Simplicity and Credulity of the People, things were eaſily received; and being once received paſſed down without contradiction. The Incoherences of Stile in the Scriptures, the odd Tranſitions, the ſeeming Contradictions, chiefly about the Order of time, the Cruelties enjoyned the *Iſraelites* in deſtroying the *Canaanites*, Circumciſion, and many other Rites of the *Jewiſh* Worſhip; ſeemed to him inſutable to the Divine Nature: And the firſt three Chapters of *Geneſis*, he thought could not be true, unleſs they were Parables. This was the ſubſtance of what he Excepted to *Revealed Religion* in general, and to the *Old Teſtament* in particular.

I an-

I anſwerd to all this, that believing a thing upon the teſtimony of another, in other matters where there was no reaſon to ſuſpect the teſtimony, chiefly where it was confirmed by other Circumſtances, was not only a reaſonable thing, but it was the hinge on which all the Government and Juſtice in the World depended: Since all Courts of Juſtice proceed upon the Evidence given by Witneſſes; for the uſe of Writings is but a thing more lately brought into the World. So then if the credibility of the thing, the innocence and diſinteredneſs of the Witneſſes, the number of them, and the publickeſt Confirmations that could poſſibly be given, do concur to perſwade us of any matter of Fact,

Fact, it is a vain thing to ſay, becauſe it is poſſible for ſo many men to agree in a Lye, that therefore theſe have done it. In all other things a man gives his aſſent when the credibility is ſtrong on the one ſide, and there appears nothing on the other ſide to ballance it. So ſuch numbers agreeing in their Teſtimony to theſe Miracles; for inſtance of our Saviours calling *Lazarus* out of the Grave the fourth day after he was buried, and his own riſing again after he was certainly dead; If there had been never ſo many Impoſtures in the World, no man can with any reaſonable colour pretend this was one. We find both by the *Jewiſh* and *Roman* Writers that lived in that time, that our Saviour was Crucified:

and

and that all his Diſciples and Followers believed certainly that he roſe again. They believed this upon the Teſtimony of the Apoſtles, and of many hundreds who ſaw it, and died confirming it: They went about to perſwade the World of it, with great Zeal, though they knew they were to get nothing by it, but Reproach and Sufferings: and by many wonders which they wrought they confirmed their Teſtimony. Now to avoid all this, by ſaying it is poſſible this might be a Contrivance, and to give no preſumption to make it ſo much as probable, that it was ſo, is in plain *Engliſh* to ſay, *We are reſolved let the Evidence be what it will, We will not believe it.*

He ſaid, If a man ſays he cannot

not believe, what help is there? for he was not maſter of his own Belief, and believing was at higheſt but a probable Opinion. To this I Anſwered, That if a man will let a wanton conceit poſſeſs his fancy againſt theſe things, and never conſider the Evidence for Religion on the other hand, but reject it upon a ſlight view of it, he ought not to ſay he cannot, but he will not believe: and while a man lives an ill courſe of life, he is not fitly qualified to examine the matter aright. Let him grow calm and vertuous, and upon due application examine things fairly, and then let him pronounce according to his Conſcience, if to take it at its loweſt, the Reaſons on the one hand are not much ſtronger than

than they are on the other. For I found he was so possessed with the general conceit that a mixture of Knaves and Fools had made all extraordinary things be easily believed, that it carried him away to determine the matter, without so much as looking on the Historical Evidence for the truth of *Christianity*, which he had not enquired into, but had bent all his Wit and Study to the support of the other side. As for that, that believing is at best but an Opinion; if the Evidence be but probable, it is so: but if it be such that it cannot be questioned, it grows as certain as knowledge: For we are no less certain that there is a great Town called *Constantinople*, the Seat of the *Ottoman* Empire, than

than that there is another called *London*. We as little doubt that Queen *Elizabeth* once Reigned, as that King *Charles* now Reigns in *England*. So that believing may be as certain, and as little ſubject to doubting as ſeeing or knowing.

There are two ſorts of believing Divine matters; the one is wrought in us by our comparing all the evidences of matter of Fact, for the confirmation of *Revealed Religion*; with the Propheſies in the Scripture; where things were punctually predicted, ſome Ages before their completion; not in dark and doubtful words, uttered like Oracles, which might bend to any Event: But in plain terms, as the foretelling that *Cyrus* by name ſhould ſend the

the *Jews* back from the Captivity, after the fixed period of seventy years: The History of the *Syrian* and *Egyptian* Kings so punctually foretold by *Daniel*, and the Prediction of the destruction of *Jerusalem*, with many Circumstances relating to it, made by our *Saviour*; joyning these to the excellent Rule and Design of the Scripture in matters of *Morality*, it is at least as reasonable to believe this as any thing else in the World. Yet such a believing as this, is only a general perswasion in the Mind, which has not that effect, till a man applying himself to the Directions set down in the Scriptures (which upon such Evidence cannot be denied, to be as reasonable, as for a man to follow the Prescriptions of a learned

learned Phyſitian, and when the Rules are both good and eaſie, to ſubmit to them for the recovering of his health) and by following theſe, finds a power entring within him, that frees him from the ſlavery of his Appetites and Paſſions, that exalts his Mind above the accidents of life, and ſpreads an inward purity in his Heart, from which a ſerene and calm Joy ariſes within him: And good men by the efficacy theſe Methods have upon them, and from the returns of their prayers, and other endeavours, grow aſſured that theſe things are true, and anſwerable to the Promiſes they find regiſtred in Scripture. All this, he ſaid, might be fancy: But to this I anſwered, That as it were un-

reaſonable to tell a man that is abroad, and knows he is awake, that perhaps he is in a dream, and in his Bed, and only thinks he is abroad, or that as ſome go about in their ſleep, ſo he may be aſleep ſtill; So good and religious men know, though others may be abuſed, by their fancies, that they are under no ſuch deception: and find they are neither hot nor *Enthuſiaſtical*, but under the power of calm and clear Principles. All this he ſaid he did not underſtand, and that it was to aſſert or beg the thing in Queſtion, which he could not comprehend.

As for the poſſibility of Revelation, it was a vain thing to deny it: For as God gives us the ſenſe of ſeeing material Ob-

Objects by our Eyes, and opened in ſome a capacity of apprehending high and ſublime things, of which other men ſeemed utterly incapable: So it was a weak aſſertion that God cannot awaken a power in ſome mens Minds, to apprehend and know ſome things, in ſuch a manner that others are not capable of it. This is not half ſo incredible to us as ſight is to a blind man, who yet may be convinced there is a ſtrange power of ſeeing that governs men, of which he finds himſelf deprived. As for the capacity put into ſuch mens hands to deceive the World, We are at the ſame time to conſider, that beſides the probity of their tempers, it cannot be thought but God can ſo forci-

bly bind up a man in ſome things, that it ſhould not be in his power to deliver them otherwiſe then as he gives him in Commiſſion: beſides the Confirmation of Miracles are a divine Credential to warrant ſuch perſons in what they deliver to the World: which cannot be imagined can be joyned to a Lye, ſince this were to put the Omnipotence of God, to atteſt that which no honeſt man will do. For the buſineſs of the Fall of Man, and other things of which we cannot perhaps give our ſelves a perfect account: We who cannot fathome the Secrets of the Councel of God, do very unreaſonably to take on us to reject an excellent Syſteme of good and holy Rules, becauſe we cannot

ſatisfie

ſatisfie our ſelves about ſome difficulties in them. Common Experience tells us, There is a great diſorder in our Natures, which is not eaſily rectified: All *Philoſophers* were ſenſible of it, and every man that deſigns to govern himſelf by Reaſon, feels the ſtruggle between it and nature: So that it is plain, there is a Lapſe of the high powers of the Soul.

But why, ſaid he, could not this be rectified, by ſome plain Rules given; but men muſt come and ſhew a trick to perſwade the World they ſpeak to them in the Name of God? I Anſwered, That Religion being a deſign to recover and ſave Mankind, was to be ſo opened as to awaken and work upon all ſorts of people: and gene-

rally men of a ſimplicity of Mind, were thoſe that were the fitteſt Objects for God to ſhew his favour to; Therefore it was neceſſary that Meſſengers ſent from Heaven ſhould appear with ſuch allarming Evidences, as might awaken the World, and prepare them by ſome aſtoniſhing Signs, to liſten to the Doctrine they were to deliver. *Philoſophy*, that was only a matter of fine Speculation, had few Votaries: And as there was no Authority in it to bind the World to believe its Dictates, ſo they were only received by ſome of nobler and refined Natures, who could apply themſelves to, and delight in ſuch Notions. But true Religion was to be built on a Foundation, that ſhould carry more weight

weight on it, and to have ſuch Convictions, as might not only reach thoſe who were already diſpoſed to receive them, but rouſe up ſuch as without great and ſenſible excitation would have otherwiſe ſlept on in their ill Courſes.

Upon this and ſome ſuch Occaſions, I told him, I ſaw the ill uſe he made of his Wit, by which he ſlurred the graveſt things with a ſlight daſh of his Fancy: and the pleaſure he found in ſuch wanton Expreſſions, as calling the doing of Miracles, *the ſhewing of a trick*, did really keep him from examining them, with that care which ſuch things required.

For the *Old Teſtament*, We are ſo remote from that time, We have ſo little knowledge

of the Language in which it was writ, have ſo imperfect an account of the Hiſtory of thoſe Ages, know nothing of their Cuſtoms, Forms of Speech, and the ſeveral Periods they might have, by which they reckoned their time, that it is rather a wonder We ſhould underſtand ſo much of it, than that many paſſages in it ſhould be ſo dark to us. The chief uſe it has to us *Chriſtians*, is, that from Writings which the *Jews* acknowlege to be divinely inſpired, it is manifeſt the *Meſſias* was promiſed before the deſtruction of their Temple: which being done long ago; and theſe Propheſies agreeing to our Saviour, and to no other, Here is a great Confirmation given to the Goſpel. But though

though many things in theſe Books could not be underſtood by us, who live above 3000 years after the chief of them were written, it is no ſuch extraordinary matter.

For that of the Deſtruction of the *Canaanites* by the *Iſraelites*, It is to be conſidered, that if God had ſent a Plague among them all, that could not have been found fault with. If then God had a Right to take away their Lives, without Injuſtice or Cruelty, he had a Right to appoint others to do it, as well to execute it by a more immediate way: And the taking away people by the Sword, is a much gentler way of dying, than to be ſmitten with a Plague or a Famine. And for the Children that were Innocent

cent of their Fathers faults, God could in another State make that up to them. So all the difficulty is, Why were the *Iſraelites* commanded to execute a thing of ſuch Barbarity? But this will not ſeem ſo hard, if we conſider that this was to be no Precedent, for future times: ſince they did not do it but upon ſpecial Warrant and Commiſſion from Heaven, evidenc'd to all the World by ſuch mighty Miracles as did plainly ſhew, That they were particularly deſign'd by God to be the Executioners of his Juſtice. And God by imploying them in ſo ſevere a Service, intended to poſſeſs them with great horrour of Idolatry, which was puniſhed in ſo extream a manner.

For

For the Rites of their Religion, We can ill judge of them, Except We perfectly underſtood the Idolatries round about them: To which we find they were much inclined: So they were to be bent by other Rites to an extream averſion from them: And yet by the pomp of many of their Ceremonies and Sacrifices, great Indulgences were given to a people naturally fond of a viſible ſplendor in Religious Worſhip. In all which, if we cannot deſcend to ſuch ſatisfactory Anſwers in every particular, as a curious man would deſire, it is no wonder. The long interval of time, and other accidents, have worn out thoſe things which were neceſſary to give us a clearer light into the meaning

of

of them. And for the ſtory of the Creation, how far ſome things in it may be Parabolical, and how far Hiſtorical, has been much diſputed: there is nothing in it that may not be hiſtorically true. For if it be acknowledged that Spirits can form Voices in the Air, for which we have as good Authority as for any thing in Hiſtory; Then it is no wonder that *Eve* being ſo lately created, might be deceived, and think a *Serpent* ſpake to her, when the Evil Spirit framed the Voice.

But in all theſe things I told him he was in the wrong way, when he examined the buſineſs of Religion, by ſome dark parts of Scripture: Therefore I deſired him to conſider the whole Contexture of the *Chriſtian*

Chriſtian Religion, the Rules it gives, and the Methods it preſcribes. Nothing can conduce more to the peace, order and happineſs of the World, than to be governed by its Rules. Nothing is more for the Intereſts of every man in particular: The Rules of Sobriety, Temperance and Moderation, were the beſt Preſervers of life, and which was perhaps more, of Health. Humility, Contempt of the Vanities of the World, and the being well employed, raiſed a mans Mind to a freedom from the Follies and Temptations that haunted the greateſt part. Nothing was ſo Generous and Great as to ſupply the Neceſſities of the Poor, and to forgive Injuries: Nothing raiſed and maintained

a mans

a mans Reputation ſo much, as to be exactly juſt, and merciful; Kind, Charitable and Compaſſionate: Nothing opened the powers of a mans Soul ſo much as a calm Temper, a ſerene Mind, free of Paſſion and Diſorder: Nothing made Societies, Families, and Neighbourhoods ſo happy, as when theſe Rules which the Goſpel preſcribes, took place, *Of doing as we would have others do to us, and loving our Neighbours as our ſelves.*

The *Chriſtian Worſhip* was alſo plain and ſimple; ſuitable to ſo pure a Doctrine. The Ceremonies of it were few and ſignificant, as the admiſſion to it by a waſhing with Water, and the Memorial of our Saviour's Death in *Bread* and *Wine*; The Motives in it to perſwade to this

this Purity, were ſtrong: That God ſees us, and will Judge us for all our Actions: That we ſhall be for ever happy or miſerable, as we paſs our Lives here: The Example of our Saviour's Life, and the great expreſſions of his Love in Dying for us, are mighty Engagements to Obey and Imitate him. The plain way of Expreſſion uſed by our Saviour and his Apoſtles, ſhews there was no Artifice, where there was ſo much Simplicity uſed: There were no Secrets kept only among the Prieſts, but every thing was open to all *Chriſtians*: The Rewards of Holineſs are not entirely put over to another State, but good men are ſpecially bleſt with peace in their Conſciences, great Joy in the

the Confidence they have of the Love of God, and of ſeeing Him for ever: And often a ſignal Courſe of Bleſſings follows them in their whole Lives: But if at other times Calamities fell on them, theſe were ſo much mitigated by the Patience they were taught, and the inward Aſſiſtances, with which they were furniſhed, that even thoſe Croſſes were converted to Bleſſings.

I deſired he would lay all theſe things together, and ſee what he could except to them, to make him think this was a Contrivance. Intereſt appears in all Humane contrivances: Our Saviour plainly had none; He avoided Applauſe, withdrew Himſelf from the Offers of a Crown: He ſubmitted to Poverty

Poverty and Reproach, and much Contradiction in his Life, and to a moſt ignominious and painful Death. His Apoſtles had none neither, They did not pretend either to Power or Wealth; But delivered a Doctrine that muſt needs condemn them, if they ever made ſuch uſe of it: They declared their Commiſſion fully without reſerves till other times: They Recorded their own Weakneſs: Some of them wrought with their own hands; and when they received the Charities of their Converts, it was not ſo much to ſupply their own Neceſſities, as to diſtribute to others: They knew they were to ſuffer much for giving their Teſtimonies, to what they had ſeen and heard: In which ſo many in a thing ſo

viſible, as Chriſt's Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, and the Effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt which He had promiſed, could not be deceived: And they gave ſuch publick Confirmations of it by the Wonders they themſelves wrought, that great multitudes were converted to a Doctrine, which, beſides the oppoſition it gave to Luſt and Paſſion, was born down and Perſecuted for 300 years: and yet its force was ſuch, that it not only weathered out all thoſe Storms, but even grew and ſpread vaſtly under them. *Pliny* about threeſcore years after, found their Numbers great and their Lives Innocent: and even *Lucian* amidſt all his Raillery, gives a high Teſtimony to their Charity and Contempt of Life, and the other

other Vertues of the *Chriſtians*; which is likewiſe more than once done by Malice it ſelf, *Julian* the Apoſtate.

If a man will lay all this in one Ballance, and compare with it the few Exceptions brought to it, he will ſoon find how ſtrong the one, and how ſlight the other are. Therefore it was an improper way, to begin at ſome Cavils about ſome Paſſages in the *New Teſtament*, or the *Old*, and from thence to prepoſſeſs one's Mind againſt the whole. The right method had been firſt to conſider the whole matter, and from ſo general a view to deſcend to more particular Enquiries: whereas they ſuffered their Minds to be foreſtalled with Prejudices; ſo that they never examined the matter impartially.

To the greateſt part of this he ſeemed to aſſent, only he excepted to the belief of Myſteries in the *Chriſtian Religion*; which he thought no man could do, ſince it is not in a mans power to believe that which he cannot comprehend: and of which He can have no Notion. The believing Myſteries, he ſaid, made way for all the Juglings of Prieſts, for they getting the people under them in that Point, ſet out to them what they pleaſed; and giving it a hard Name, and calling it a *Myſtery*, The people were tamed, and eaſily believed it. The reſtraining a man from the uſe of Women, Except one in the way of Marriage, and denying the remedy of Divorce, he thought unreaſonable Impoſitions

ſitions on the Freedom of Mankind: And the buſineſs of the Clergy, and their Maintenance, with the belief of ſome Authority and Power conveyed in their Orders, lookt, as he thought, like a piece of Contrivance: And why, ſaid he, muſt a man tell me, I cannot be ſaved, unleſs I believe things againſt my Reaſon, and then that I muſt pay him for telling me of them? Theſe were all the Exceptions which at any time I heard from him to *Chriſtianity*. To which I made theſe Anſwers.

For Myſteries it is plain there is in every thing ſomewhat that is unaccountable. How Animals or Men are formed in their Mothers bellies, how Seeds grow in the Earth, how the

Soul dwells in the Body, and acts and moves it; How we retain the Figures of ſo many words or things in our Memories, and how we draw them out ſo eaſily and orderly in our Thoughts or Diſcourſes? How Sight and Hearing were ſo quick and diſtinct, how we move, and how Bodies were compounded and united? Theſe things if we follow them into all the Difficulties, that we may raiſe about them, will appear every whit as unaccountable as any Myſtery of Religion: And a blind or deaf man would judge Sight or Hearing as incredible, as any Myſtery may be judged by us: For our Reaſon is not equal to them. In the ſame rank, different degrees of Age or Capacity raiſe ſome far above

above others: So that Children cannot fathome the Learning, nor weak perſons the Councels of more illuminated Minds: Therefore it was no wonder if we could not underſtand the Divine Eſſence: We cannot imagine how two ſuch different Natures as a Soul and a Body ſhould ſo unite together, and be mutually affected with one anothers Concerns, and how the Soul has one Principle of Reaſon, by which it acts Intellectually, and another of life by which it joyns to the Body and acts Vitally; two Principles ſo widely differing both in their Nature and Operation, and yet united in one and the ſame Perſon. There might be as many hard Arguments brought againſt the poſſibility

of these things, which yet every one knows to be true, from Speculative Notions, as against the Mysteries mentioned in the Scriptures. As that of the *Trinity*, That in one Essence there are three different Principles of Operation, which, for want of terms fit to express them by, We call *Persons*, and are called in Scripture *The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, and that the Second of these did unite Himself in a most intimate manner with the Humane Nature of Jesus Christ: And that the Sufferings he underwent, were accepted of God as a Sacrifice for our Sins; Who thereupon conferred on Him a Power of granting Eternal Life to all that submit to the Terms on which He offers it; And that the matter

matter of which our Bodies once conſiſted, which may be as juſty called the Bodies we laid down at our Deaths, as theſe can be ſaid to be the Bodies which we formerly lived in, being refined and made more ſpiritual, ſhall be reunited to our Souls, and become a fit Inſtrument for them in a more perfect Eſtate: And that God inwardly bends and moves our Wills, by ſuch Impreſſions, as he can make on our Bodies and Minds.

Theſe, which are the chief Myſteries of our Religion, are neither ſo unreaſonable, that any other Objection lies againſt them, but this, that they agree not with our Common Notions, nor ſo unaccountable that ſomewhat like them, cannot be

be aſſigned in other things, which are believed really to be, though the manner of them cannot be apprehended: So this ought not to be any juſt Objection to the ſubmiſſion of our Reaſon to what we cannot ſo well conceive, provided our belief of it be well grounded. There have been too many Niceties brought in indeed, rather to darken then explain theſe: They have been defended by weak Arguments, and illuſtrated by Similies not always ſo very apt and pertinent. And new ſubtilties have been added, which have rather perplexed than cleared them. All this cannot be denied; the Oppoſition of *Hereticks* anciently, occaſioned too much Curioſity among the *Fathers:* Which

Which the *School-men* have wonderfully advanced of late times. But if Myſteries were received, rather in the ſimplicity in which they are delivered in the Scriptures, than according to the deſcantings of fanciful men upon them, they would not appear much more incredible, than ſome of the common Objects of ſenſe and perception. And it is a needleſs fear that if ſome Myſteries are acknowledged, which are plainly mentioned in the *New Teſtament*, it will then be in the power of the Prieſts to add more at their pleaſure. For it is an abſurd Inference from our being bound to aſſent to ſome Truths about the Divine Eſſence, of which the manner is not underſtood, to argue that therefore

fore in an Object presented duly to our Senses, such as *Bread* and *Wine*, We should be bound to believe against their Testimony, that it is not what our Senses perceived it to be, but the whole *Flesh* and *Blood* of *Christ*; an entire Body being in every Crumb and drop of it. It is not indeed in a mans power to believe thus against his Sense and Reason, where the Object is proportioned to them, and fitly applied, and the Organs are under no indispositi-on or disorder. It is certain that no Mystery is to be admitted, but ~~from~~ *where* very clear and expres Authorities from Scripture, which could not reasonably be understood in any other sense. And though a man cannot form an explicite

Notion

Notion of a Myſtery, for then it would be no longer a Myſtery, Yet in general he may believe a thing to be, though he cannot give himſelf a particular account of the way of it: or rather though he cannot Anſwer ſome Objections which lie againſt it. We know We believe many ſuch in Humane matters, which are more within our reach: and it is very unreaſonable to ſay, We may not do it in Divine things, which are much more above our Apprehenſions.

For the ſevere Reſtraint of the uſe of Women, it is hard to deny that Priviledge to Jeſus Chriſt as a Law-Giver, to lay ſuch Reſtraints, as all inferiour Legiſlators do; who when they find the Liberties their Subjects

jects take, prove hurtful to them, ſet ſuch Limits, and make ſuch Regulations, as they judge neceſſary and expedient. It cannot be ſaid but the Reſtraint of Appetite is neceſſary in ſome Inſtances: and if it is neceſſary in theſe, perhaps other Reſtraints are no leſs neceſſary, to fortifie and ſecure theſe. For if it be acknowledged that Men have a property in their Wives and Daughters, ſo that to defile the one, or corrupt the other, is an injuſt and injurious thing; It is certain, that except a man carefully governs his Appetites, he will break through theſe Reſtraints: and therefore our Saviour knowing that nothing could ſo effectually deliver the World from the miſchief of unreſtrained Appetite, as ſuch a Con-

a Confinement, might very reaſonably enjoyn it. And in all ſuch Caſes We are to ballance the Inconveniences on both hands, and where we find they are heavieſt, We are to acknowledge the Equity of the Law. On the one hand there is no prejudice, but the reſtraint of Appetite; On the other, are the miſchiefs of being given up to pleaſure, of running inordinately into it, of breaking the quiet of our own Family at home, and of others abroad: the ingaging into much Paſſion, the doing many falſe and impious things to compaſs what is deſired, the Waſt of mens Eſtates, time, and health. Now let any man judge, Whether the prejudices on this ſide, are not greater, than

than that ſingle one of the other ſide, of being denied ſome pleaſure? For *Polygamy*, it is but reaſonable ſince Women are equally concern'd in the Laws of Marriage, that they ſhould be conſidered as well as Men: But in a State of *Polygamy* they are under great miſery and jealouſie, and are indeed barbarouſly uſed. Man being alſo of a ſociable Nature, Friendſhip and Converſe were among the primitive Intendments of Marriage, in which as far as the man may excel the Wife in greatneſs of Mind, and height of Knowledge, the Wife ſomeway makes that up with her Affection and tender Care: So that from both happily mixed, there ariſes a Harmony, which is to vertuous Minds

one

one of the greateſt joys of life: But all this is gone in a ſtate of *Polygamy*, which occaſions perpetual Jarrings and Jealouſies. And the Variety does but engage men to a freer Range of pleaſure, which is not to be put in the Ballance with the far greater Miſchiefs that muſt follow the other courſe. So that it is plain, Our Saviour conſidered the Nature of Man, what it could bear, and what was fit for it, when he ſo reſtrained us in theſe our Liberties. And for Divorce, a power to break that Bond would too much encourage married perſons in the little quarrellings that may riſe between them; If it were in their power to depart one from another. For when they know that cannot be, and

that they muſt live and die together, it does naturally incline them to lay down their Reſentments, and to endeavour to live as well together as they can. So the Law of the Goſpel being a Law of Love, deſigned to engage *Chriſtians* to mutual love; It was fit that all ſuch Proviſions ſhould be made, as might advance and maintain it: and all ſuch Liberties be taken away, as are apt to enkindle or foment ſtrife. This might fall in ſome inſtances to be uneaſie and hard enough, but Laws conſider what falls out moſt commonly, and cannot provide for all particular Caſes. The beſt Laws are in ſome Inſtances very great grievances. But the Advantages being ballanced with the Inconveniences,

Mea-

Meaſures are to be taken accordingly. Upon this whole matter I ſaid, That pleaſure ſtood in oppoſition to other Conſiderations of great Weight, and ſo the deciſion was eaſie. And ſince our Saviour offers us ſo great Rewards, It is but reaſonable He have a Priviledge of loading theſe Promiſes with ſuch Conditions, as are not in themſelves grateful to our natural Inclinations: For all that propoſe high Rewards, have thereby a right to exact difficult performances.

To this he ſaid, We are ſure the terms are difficult, but are not ſo ſure of the Rewards. Upon this I told him, That we have the ſame aſſurance of the Rewards, that we have of the

other parts of *Chriſtian Religion.* We have the Promiſes of God made to us by Chriſt, confirmed by many Miracles: We have the Earneſts of theſe, in the quiet and peace which follows a good Conſcience: and in the Reſurrection of Him from the dead, who hath promiſed to raiſe us up. So that the Reward is ſufficiently aſſured to us: And there is no reaſon it ſhould be given to us, before the Conditions are performed, on which the Promiſes are made. It is but reaſonable that we ſhould truſt God, and do our Duty, *In hopes of that eternal Life, which God who cannot lie, hath promiſed.* The Difficulties are not ſo great, as thoſe which ſometimes the commoneſt concerns

of

of Life bring upon us: The learning ſome Trades or Sciences, the governing our Health and Affairs, bring us often under as great ſtraights. So that it ought to be no juſt prejudice, that there are ſome things in Religion that are uneaſie, ſince this is rather the effect of our corrupt Natures, which are farther deprav'd by vitious habits, and can hardly turn to any new courſe of life, without ſome pain, than of the Dictates of *Chriſtianity*, which are in themſelves juſt and reaſonable, and will be eaſie to us when renew'd, and in a good meaſure reſtor'd to our Primitive Integrity.

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which they pretended; if they ſtretched their Deſigns too far, The Goſpel did plainly reprove them for it: So that it was very ſuitable to that Church, which was ſo groſly faulty this way, to take the Scriptures out of the hands of the people, ſince they do ſo manifeſtly diſclaim all ſuch practices. The Prieſts of the true *Chriſtian Religion* have no ſecrets among them, which the World muſt not know, but are only an Order of Men dedicated to God, to attend on Sacred things, who ought to be holy in a more peculiar manner, ſince they are to handle the things of God. It was neceſſary that ſuch perſons ſhould have a due Eſteem paid them, and a fit Maintenance appointed for them: That ſo they might

might be preſerved from the Contempt that follows Poverty, and the Diſtractions which the providing againſt it might otherways involve them in: And as in the Order of the World, it was neceſſary for the ſupport of Magiſtracy and Government, and for preſerving its eſteem, that ſome ſtate be uſed (though it is a happineſs when Great Men have Philoſophical Minds, to deſpiſe the Pageantry of it.) So the plentiful ſupply of the Clergy, if well uſed and applied by them, will certainly turn to the Advantage of Religion. And if ſome men either through Ambition or Covetouſneſs uſed indirect means, or ſervile Compliances to aſpire to ſuch Dignities, and being poſſeſſed of

them, applied their Wealth either to Luxury or Vain Pomp, or made great Fortunes out of it for their Families; theſe were perſonal failings in which the Doctrine of Chriſt was not concerned.

He upon that told me plainly, There was nothing that gave him, and many others, a more ſecret encouragement in their ill ways, than that thoſe who pretended to believe, lived ſo that they could not be thought to be in earneſt, when they ſaid it: For he was ſure *Religion* was either a meer Contrivance, or the moſt important thing that could be: So that if he once believed, he would ſet himſelf in great earneſt to live ſuitably to it. The aſpirings that he had obſerved at Court, of ſome of

of the Clergy, with the ſervile ways they took to attain to Preferment, and the Animoſities among thoſe of ſeveral Parties, about trifles, made him often think they ſuſpected the things were not true, which in their Sermons and Diſcourſes they ſo earneſtly recommended. Of this he had gathered many Inſtances; I knew ſome of them were Miſtakes and Calumnies; Yet I could not deny but ſomething of them might be too true: And I publiſh this the more freely, to put all that pretend to Religion, chiefly thoſe that are dedicated to holy Functions, in mind of the great Obligation that lies on them to live ſutably to their Profeſſion: Since otherwiſe a great deal of the Irreligion

gion and Atheiſm that is among us, may too juſtly be charged on them: for wicked men are delighted out of meaſure when they diſcover ill things in them, and conclude from thence not only that they are Hypocrites, but that Religion it ſelf is a cheat.

But I ſaid to him upon this Head, that though no good man could continue in the practice of any known ſin, yet ſuch might, by the violence or ſurpriſe of a Temptation, to which they are liable as much as others, be of a ſudden overcome to do an ill thing, to their great grief all their life after. And then it was a very injuſt Inference, Upon ſome few failings, to conclude that ſuch men do not believe themſelves.

But

But how bad ſoever many are, it cannot be denied but there are alſo many both of the Clergy and Laity, who give great and real Demonſtrations of the power Religion has over them; in their Contempt of the World, the ſtrictneſs of their Lives, their readineſs to forgive Injuries, to relieve the Poor, and to do good on all Occaſions: and yet even theſe may have their failings, either in ſuch things wherein their Conſtitutions are weak, or their Temptations ſtrong and ſuddain: And in all ſuch caſes We are to judge of men, rather by the courſe of their Lives, than by the Errors, that they through infirmity or ſurprize may have ſlipt into.

Theſe

Theſe were the chief Heads we diſcourſed on; and as far as I can remember, I have faithfully repeated the ſubſtance of our Arguments: I have not concealed the ſtrongeſt things he ſaid to me, but though I have not enlarged on all the Excurſions of his Wit in ſetting them off, Yet I have given them their full ſtrength, as he expreſſed them; and as far as I could recollect, have uſed his own words: So that I am afraid ſome may cenſure me for ſetting down theſe things ſo largely, which Impious Men may make an ill uſe of, and gather together to encourage and defend themſelves in their Vices: But if they will compare them with the Anſwers made to them, and the ſenſe that

that ſo great and refined a Wit had of them afterwards, I hope they may through the bleſſing of God be not altogether ineffectual.

The iſſue of all our Diſcourſes was this, He told me, He ſaw Vice and Impiety were as contrary to Humane Society, as wild Beaſts let looſe would be; and therefore he firmly reſolved to change the whole method of his Life: to become ſtrictly juſt and true, to be Chaſt and Temperate, to forbear Swearing and Irreligious Diſcourſe, to Worſhip and Pray to his Maker: And that though he was not arrived at a full perſwaſion of *Chriſtianity*, he would never employ his Wit more to run it down, or to corrupt others.

Of

Of which I have since a further assurance, from a Person of Quality, who conversed much with him, the last year of his life; to whom he would often say, That he was happy, if he did believe, and that he would never endeavour to draw him from it.

To all this I Answered, That a Vertuous Life would be very uneasie to him, unless Vicious Inclinations were removed: It would otherwise be a perpetual constraint. Nor could it be effected without an inward Principle to change him: and that was only to be had by applying himself to God for it in frequent and earnest Prayers: And I was sure if his Mind were once cleared of these Disorders, and cured of those Distem-

Diſtempers, which Vice brought on it, ſo great an Underſtanding would ſoon ſee through all thoſe ſlights of Wit, that do feed Atheiſm and Irreligion: which have a falſe glittering in them, that dazles ſome weak ſighted Minds, who have not capacity enough to penetrate further than the Surfaces of things: and ſo they ſtick in theſe Toyls, which the ſtrength of his Mind would ſoon break thorough, if it were once freed from thoſe things that depreſſed and darkened it.

At this paſs he was when he went from *London*, about the beginning of *April:* He had not been long in the Country when he thought he was ſo well, that being to go to his Eſtate in *Somerſetſhire* he rode thither

thither Post. This heat and violent motion did so inflame an Ulcer, that was in his Bladder, that it raised a very great pain in those parts: Yet he with much difficulty came back by Coach to the Lodge at *Woodstock-Park*. He was then wounded both in Body and Mind: He understood Physick and his own Constitution and Distemper so well, that he concluded he could hardly recover: For the Ulcer broke and vast quantities of purulent matter past with his Urine. But now the hand of God touched him, and as he told me, It was not only a general dark Melancholy over his Mind, such as he had formerly felt; but a most penetrating cutting Sorrow. So that though in his Body

Body he ſuffered extream pain, for ſome weeks, Yet the Agonies of his Mind ſometimes ſwallowed up the ſenſe of what he felt in his Body. He told me, and gave it me in charge, to tell it to one for whom he was much concern'd, that though there were nothing to come after this life, Yet all the Pleaſures he had ever known in Sin, were not worth that torture he had felt in his Mind: He conſidered he had not only neglected and diſhonoured, but had openly defied his Maker, and had drawn many others into the like Impieties: So that he looked on himſelf as one that was in great danger of being damn'd. He then ſet himſelf wholly to turn to God unfeignedly, and to do all that was

possible in that little remainder of his life which was before him, to redeem those great portions of it, that he had formerly so ill employed. The Minister that attended constantly on him, was that good and worthy man Mr. *Parsons*, his Mothers Chaplain, who hath since his death Preached, according to the Directions he received from him, his Funeral Sermon: in which there are so many remarkable Passages, that I shall refer my *Reader* to them, and will repeat none of them here, that I may not thereby lessen his desire to edifie himself by that excellent Discourse, which has given so great and so general a satisfaction to all good and judicious *Readers*. I shall speak cursorily of every thing,

thing, but that which I had immediately from himſelf: He was viſited every Week of his ſickneſs by his *Dioceſan*, that truly Primitive Prelate, the Lord Biſhop of *Oxford*; who though he lived ſix miles from him, yet looked on this as ſo important a piece of his Paſtoral Care, that he went often to him; and treated him with that decent plainneſs and freedom which is ſo natural to him; and took care alſo that he might not on terms more eaſie than ſafe, be at peace with himſelf. Dr. *Marſhal* the Learned and Worthy *Rector* of *Lincoln*-Colledge in *Oxford*, being the Miniſter of the Pariſh, was alſo frequently with him: and by theſe helps he was ſo directed and ſupported, that he might not on the

one hand ſatisfie himſelf with too ſuperficial a Repentance, nor on the other hand be out of meaſure oppreſſed with a Sorrow without hope. As ſoon as I heard he was ill, but yet in ſuch a condition that I might write to him, I wrote a Letter to the beſt purpoſe I could. He ordered one that was then with him, to aſſure me it was very welcome to him: but not ſatisfied with that, he ſent me an Anſwer, which, as the Counteſs of *Rocheſter* his Mother told me, he dictated every word, and then ſigned it. I was once unwilling to have publiſh'd it, becauſe of a Complement in it to my ſelf, far above my merit, and not very well ſuiting with his Condition.

But

But the ſenſe he expreſſes in it of the Change then wrought on him, hath upon ſecond thoughts prevail'd with me to publiſh it, leaving out what concerns my ſelf.

Woodſtock-Park,
June 25. 1680. *Oxfordſhire.*

My moſt Honour'd Dr. Burnett,

MY Spirits and Body decay ſo equally together, that I ſhall write You a Letter as weak as I am in perſon. I begin to value Church-men above all men in the World, &c. If God be yet pleaſed

to spare me longer in this World, I hope in your Conversation to be exalted to that degree of Piety, that the World may see how much I abhor what I so long loved, and how much I glory in Repentance, and in Gods Service. Bestow your Prayers upon me, that God would spare me (if it be his good Will) to shew a true Repentance and Amendment of life for the time to come: Or else if the Lord pleaseth to put an end to my worldly being now, that He would mercifully accept of my Death-Bed Repentance, and perform that Promise

Promiſe that He hath been pleaſed to make, That at what time ſoever a Sinner doth Repent, He would receive him. *Put up theſe Prayers, moſt dear Doctor, to Almighty God for your moſt Obedient and Languiſhing Servant.*

Rocheſter.

He told me when I saw him, That he hoped I would come to him upon that general Insinuation of the desire he had of my Company; and he was loth to write more plainly: not knowing whether I could easily spare so much time. I told him, That on the other hand, I looked on it as a presumption to come so far, when he was in such excellent hands; and though perhaps the freedom formerly between us, might have excused it with those to whom it was known; yet it might have the appearance of so much Vanity, to such as were strangers to it; So that till I received his Letter, I did not think it convenient to come to him: And then not hearing that there was any danger of a sudden change, I delayed

delayed going to him till the Twentieth of *July*. At my coming to his Houſe an accident fell out not worth mentioning, but that ſome have made a ſtory of it. His Servant being a *French-man* carried up my Name wrong, ſo that he miſtook it for another, who had ſent to him, that he would undertake his Cure, and he being reſolved not to meddle with him, did not care to ſee him: This miſtake laſted ſome hours, with which I was the better contented, becauſe he was not then in ſuch a condition, that my being about him could have been of any uſe to him: for that Night was like to have been his laſt. He had a *Convulſion-Fit*, and raved; but *Opiates* being given him, after ſome hours reſt,

reſt, his raving left him ſo entirely, that it never again returned to him.

I cannot eaſily expreſs the Tranſport he was in, when he awoke and ſaw me by him: He brake out in the tendereſt Expreſſions concerning my kindneſs in coming ſo far to ſee *ſuch a One*, uſing terms of great abhorrence concerning himſelf, which I forbear to relate. He told me, as his ſtrength ſerved him at ſeveral ſnatches, for he was then ſo low, that he could not hold up diſcourſe long at once, what ſenſe he had of his paſt life; what ſad apprehenſion for having ſo offended his Maker, and diſhonoured his Redeemer: What Horrours he had gone through, and how much his Mind was turned to call

call on God, and on his Crucified Saviour: So that he hoped he ſhould obtain Mercy, for he believed he had ſincerely repented; and had now a calm in his Mind after that ſtorm that he had been in for ſome Weeks. He had ſtrong Apprehenſions and Perſwaſions of his admittance to Heaven: of which he ſpake once not without ſome extraordinary Emotion. It was indeed the only time that he ſpake with any great warmth to me: For his Spirits were then low, and ſo far ſpent, that though thoſe about him told me, He had expreſſed formerly great fervor in his Devotions; Yet Nature was ſo much ſunk, that theſe were in a great meaſure fallen off. But he made me pray often

often with him; and ſpoke of his Converſion to God as a thing now grown up in him to a ſetled and calm ſerenity. He was very anxious to know my Opinion of a Death-Bed Repentance. I told him, That before I gave any Reſolution in that, it would be convenient that I ſhould be acquainted more particularly with the Circumſtances and Progreſs of his Repentance.

Upon this he ſatisfied me in many particulars. He ſaid, He was now perſwaded both of the truth of *Chriſtianity*, and of the power of inward Grace, of which he gave me this ſtrange account. He ſaid, Mr. *Parſons* in order to his Conviction, read to him the 53. *Chapter* of the Propheſie of *Iſaiah*,

Iſaiah, and compared *that* with the Hiſtory of our Saviour's Paſſion, that he might there ſee a Propheſie concerning it, written many Ages before it was done; which the *Jews* that blaſphemed Jeſus Chriſt ſtill kept in their hands, as a Book divinely inſpired. He ſaid to me, *That as he heard it read, he felt an inward force upon him, which did ſo enlighten his Mind, and convince him, that he could reſiſt it no longer: For the words had an authority which did ſhoot like Raies or Beams in his Mind; So that he was not only convinced by the Reaſonings he had about it, which ſatisfied his Underſtanding, but by a power which did ſo effectually conſtrain him, that he did ever after as firmly believe in his Saviour, as if he had ſeen him*

him in the Clouds. He had made it be read ſo often to him, that he had got it by heart: and went through a great part of it in Diſcourſe with me, with a ſort of heavenly Pleaſure, giving me his Reflections on it. Some
Verſ. 1. few I remember, *Who hath believed our Report? Here*, he ſaid, *was foretold the Oppoſition the Goſpel was to meet with from ſuch*
Verſ. 2. *Wretches as he was. He hath no Form nor Comlineſs, and when we ſhall ſee Him, there is no beauty that we ſhould deſire him.* On this he ſaid, *The meanneſs of his appearance and Perſon has made vain and fooliſh people diſparage Him, becauſe he came not in ſuch a Fools-Coat as they delight in.* What he ſaid on the other parts I do not well remember: and indeed I was ſo affected with what

what he ſaid then to me, that the general tranſport I was under during the whole Diſcourſe, made me leſs capable to remember theſe Particulars, as I wiſh I had done.

He told me, That he had thereupon received the Sacrament with great ſatisfaction, and that was encreaſed by the pleaſure he had in his Ladies receiving it with him: who had been for ſome years miſled into the Communion of the Church of *Rome*, and he himſelf had been not a little Inſtrumental in procuring it, as he freely acknowledged. So that it was one of the joyfulleſt things that befel him in his Sickneſs, that he had ſeen that Miſchief removed, in which he had ſo great a Hand: and during

during his whole Sickneſs, he expreſſed ſo much tenderneſs and true kindneſs to his Lady, that as it eaſily defaced the remembrance of every thing wherein he had been in fault formerly, ſo it drew from her the moſt paſſionate care and concern for him that was poſſible: which indeed deſerves a higher Character than is decent to give of a Perſon yet alive. But I ſhall confine my Diſcourſe to the Dead.

He told me, He had overcome all his Reſentments to all the World; So that he bore ill will to no Perſon, nor hated any upon perſonal accounts. He had given a true ſtate of his Debts, and had ordered to pay them all, as far as his Eſtate that was not ſetled, could go: and

and was confident that if all that was owing to him were paid to his Executors, his Creditors would be all ſatisfied. He ſaid, He found his Mind now poſſeſſed with another ſenſe of things, than ever he had formerly: He did not repine under all his pain, and in one of the ſharpeſt Fits he was under while I was with him; He ſaid, *He did willingly ſubmit*; and looking up to Heaven, ſaid, *God's holy Will be done, I bleſs Him for all He does to me.* He profeſſed he was contented either to die or live, as ſhould pleaſe God: And though it was a fooliſh thing for a man to pretend to chooſe, Whether he would die or live, yet he wiſhed rather to die. He knew he could never be ſo well, that life ſhould be

comfortable to him. He was confident he should be happy if he died, but he feared if he lived he might Relapse: And then said he to me, *In what a condition shall I be, if I Relapse after all this?* But, he said, *he trusted in the Grace and Goodness of God, and was resolved to avoid all those Temptations, that Course of Life, and Company, that was likely to insnare him: and he desired to live on no other account, but that he might by the change of his Manners some way take off the high Scandal his former Behaviour had given.* All these things at several times I had from him, besides some Messages which very well became a dying Penitent to some of his former Friends, and a Charge to publish any thing con-

concerning him, that might be a mean to reclaim others. *Praying God, that as his life had done much hurt, ſo his death might do ſome good.*

Having underſtood all theſe things from him, and being preſſed to give him my Opinion plainly about his Eternal State; I told him, That though the Promiſes of the Goſpel did all depend upon a real change of Heart and Life, as the indiſpenſable condition upon which they were made; and that it was ſcarce poſſible to know certainly whether our Hearts are changed, unleſs it appeared in our lives; and the Repentance of moſt dying men, being like the howlings of condemned Priſoners for Pardon, which flowed from no ſenſe of their

Crimes, but from the horrour of approaching Death; there was little reaſon to encourage any to hope much from ſuch Sorrowings: Yet certainly if the Mind of a Sinner, even on a Death-Bed, be truly renewed and turned to God, ſo great is His Mercy, that He will receive him, even in that extremity. He ſaid, *He was ſure his Mind was entirely turned, and though Horrour had given him his firſt awaking, yet that was now grown up into a ſetled Faith and Converſion.*

There is but one prejudice lies againſt all this, to defeat the good Ends of Divine Providence by it upon others, as well as on himſelf: and that is that it was a part of his Diſeaſe, and that the lowneſs of his

his Spirits made ſuch an alteration in him, that he was not what he had formerly been: and this ſome have carried ſo far as to ſay, That he died mad: Theſe Reports are raiſed by thoſe who are unwilling that the laſt Thoughts or Words of a Perſon, every way ſo extraordinary, ſhould have any effect either on themſelves or others: And it is to be fear'd, that ſome may have ſo far ſeared their Conſciences, and exceeded the common Meaſures of Sin and Infidelity, that neither this Teſtimony, nor one coming from the Dead, would ſignifie much towards their Conviction. That this Lord was either mad or ſtupid, is a thing ſo notoriouſly untrue, that it is the greateſt Impudence

for any that were about him, to Report it; and a very unreasonable Credulity in others to believe it. All the while I was with him, after he had slept out the disorders of the Fit he was in the first Night, he was not only without Ravings; but had a clearness in his Thoughts, in his Memory, in his reflections on Things and Persons, far beyond what I ever saw in a Person so low in his strength. He was not able to hold out long in Discourse, for his Spirits failed: but once for half an hour, and often for a quarter of an hour, after he awakened, he had a Vivacity in his Discourse that was extraordinary, and in all things like himself. He called often for his Children, his Son the now Earl of *Rochester*, and

and his three Daughters, and ſpake to them with a ſenſe and feeling that cannot be expreſſed in Writing. He called me once to look on them all, and ſaid, *See how Good God has been to me, in giving me ſo many Bleſſings, and I have carried my ſelf to Him like an ungracious and unthankful Dog.* He once talked a great deal to me of Publick Affairs, and of many Perſons and things, with the ſame clearneſs of thought and expreſſion, that he had ever done before. So that by no ſign, but his Weakneſs of Body, and giving over Diſcourſe ſo ſoon, could I perceive a difference between what his Parts formerly were, and what they were then.

And that wherein the preſence of his Mind appeared

most, was in the total change of an ill habit grown so much upon him, that he could hardly govern himself, when he was any ways heated, three Minutes without falling into it; I mean *Swearing*. He had acknowledged to me the former Winter, that he abhorred it as a base and indecent thing, and had set himself much to break it off: but he confessed that he was so over-power'd by that ill Custom, that he could not speak with any warmth, without repeated Oaths, which, upon any sort of provocation, came almost naturally from him: But in his last Remorses this did so sensibly affect him, that by a resolute and constant watchfulness, the habit of it was perfectly master'd; So that upon

upon the returns of pain which were very ſevere and frequent upon him, the laſt day I was with him; or upon ſuch diſpleaſures as people ſick or in pain are apt to take of a ſudden at thoſe about them; On all theſe Occaſions he never ſwore an Oath all the while I was there.

Once he was offended with the delay of one that he thought made not haſt enough, with ſomewhat he called for, and ſaid in a little heat, *That damned Fellow:* Soon after I told him, I was glad to find his Style ſo reformed, and that he had ſo entirely overcome that ill habit of Swearing; Only that word of calling any *damned*, which had returned upon him, was not decent. His Anſwer

was,

was, *Oh that Language of Fiends which was ſo familiar to me, hangs yet about me: Sure none has deſerved more to be damned than I have done.* And after he had humbly asked God Pardon for it, he deſired me to call the Perſon to him, that he might ask him forgiveneſs: but I told him that was needleſs, for he had ſaid it of one that did not hear it, and ſo could not be offended by it.

In this diſpoſition of Mind did he continue all the while I was with him, four days together; He was then brought ſo low that all hope of Recovery was gone. Much purulent matter came from him with his Urine, which he paſſed always with ſome pain; But one day with unexpreſſible torment: Yet

Yet he bore it decently, without breaking out into Repinings, or impatient Complaints. He imagined he had a Stone in his Paſſage, but it being ſearched, none was found. The whole ſubſtance of his Body was drained by the Ulcer, and nothing was left but Skin and Bone: and by lying much on his Back, the parts there began to mortifie. But he had been formerly ſo low, that he ſeemed as much paſt all hopes of life as now; which made him one Morning after a full and ſweet Nights reſt procured by *Laudanum*, given him without his knowledge, to fancy it was an effort of Nature, and to begin to entertain ſome hopes of Recovery: For he ſaid, He felt himſelf perfectly well, and that he

had nothing ailing him, but an extream weakneſs, which might go off in time: and then he entertained me with the Scheme he had laid down for the reſt of his life, how retired, how ſtrict, and how ſtudious he intended to be: But this was ſoon over, for he quickly felt that it was only the effect of a good ſleep, and that he was ſtill in a very deſperate ſtate.

I thought to have left him on *Friday*, but not without ſome Paſſion, he deſired me to ſtay that day: there appeared no ſymptome of preſent death; and a Worthy Phyſitian then with him, told me, That though he was ſo low that an accident might carry him away on a ſuddain; Yet without that, he thought he might live yet

ſome

ſome Weeks. So on *Saturday* at Four of the Clock in the Morning I left him, being the 24*th* of *July*. But I durſt not take leave of him; for he had expreſſed ſo great an unwillingneſs to part with me the day before, that if I had not preſently yielded to one days ſtay, it was like to have given him ſome trouble, therefore I thought it better to leave him without any Formality. Some hours after he asked for me, and when it was told him, I was gone, he ſeem'd to be troubled, and ſaid, *Has my Friend left me, then I ſhall die ſhortly.* After that he ſpake but once or twice till he died: He lay much ſilent: Once they heard him praying very devoutly.

And

And on *Monday* about Two of the Clock in the Morning, he died, without any *Convulsion*, or so much as a groan.

THE

THE CONCLUSION.

THus he lived, and thus he died in the Three and and Thirtieth Year of his Age. Nature had fitted him for great things, and his Knowledge and Obſervation qualify'd him to have been one of the moſt extraordinary Men, not only of his Nation, but of the Age he lived in; And I do verily believe, that if God had thought fit to have continued him longer in the World, he had been the Wonder and Delight of all that knew him. But the infinitely Wiſe God knew better what was fit for him, and what the Age deſerved. For men who have ſo caſt off all

all ſenſe of God and Religion, deſerve not ſo ſignal a Bleſſing, as the Example and Conviction which the reſt of his life might have given them. And I am apt to think that the Divine Goodneſs took pity on him, and ſeeing the ſincerity of his Repentance, would try and venture him no more in Circumſtances of Temptation, perhaps too hard for Humane Frailty. Now he is at reſt, and I am very confident enjoys the Fruits of his late, but ſincere Repentance. But ſuch as live, and ſtill go on in their Sins and Impieties, and will not be awakened neither by this, nor the other Allarms that are about their Ears, are, it ſeems, given up by God to a judicial Hardneſs and Impenitency.

Here

Here is a publick Inſtance of One who lived of their Side, but could not die of it: And though none of all our Libertines underſtood better than he, the ſecret Myſteries of Sin, had more ſtudied every thing that could ſupport a man in it, and had more reſiſted all external means of Conviction than he had done; Yet when the hand of God inwardly touched him, he could no longer *kick againſt thoſe Pricks*, but *humbled himſelf under that Mighty Hand*, and as he uſed often to ſay in his Prayers, *He who had ſo often denied Him, found then no other Shelter, but his Mercies and Compaſſions.*

I have written this Account with all the tenderneſs and caution I could uſe, and in whatſoever

I may have failed, I have been ſtrict in the truth of what I have related, remembring that of *Job, Will ye lie for God?* Religion has Strength and Evidence enough in it ſelf, and needs no Support from Lyes, and made Stories. I do not pretend to have given the formal words that he ſaid, though I have done that where I could remember them. But I have written this with the ſame Sincerity, that I would have done, had I known I had been to die immediately after I had finiſhed it. I did not take Notes of our Diſcourſes laſt Winter after we parted; ſo I may have perhaps in the ſetting out of my Anſwers to him, have enlarged on ſeveral things both more fully and more regularly, than

than I could ſay them in ſuch free Diſcourſes as we had. I am not ſo ſure of all I ſet down as ſaid by me, as I am of all ſaid by him to me. But yet the ſubſtance of the greateſt part, even of that, is the ſame.

It remains that I humbly and earneſtly beſeech all that ſhall take this Book in their hands, that they will conſider it entirely: and not wreſt ſome parts to an ill intention. God, the Searcher of Hearts, knows with what Fidelity I have writ it: But if any will drink up only the Poiſon that may be in it, without taking alſo the Antidote here given to thoſe ill Principles; or conſidering the ſenſe that this great Perſon had of them, when he reflected

ſeriouſly on them; and will rather confirm themſelves in their ill ways, by the Scruples and Objections which I ſet down, than be edified by the other parts of it; As I will look on it as a great Infelicity, that I ſhould have ſaid any thing that may ſtrengthen them in their Impieties; So the ſincerity of my Intentions will, I doubt not, excuſe me at his hands, to whom I offer up this ſmall Service.

I have now performed, in the beſt manner I could, what was left on me by this Noble Lord, and have done with the part of an Hiſtorian. I ſhall in the next place ſay ſomewhat as a Divine. So extraordinary a Text does almoſt force a Sermon, though it is plain enough

it

it ſelf, and ſpeaks with ſo loud a Voice, that thoſe who are not awakened by it, will perhaps conſider nothing that I can ſay. If our Libertines will become ſo far ſober as to examine their former Courſe of Life, with that diſingagement and impartiality, which they muſt acknowledge a wiſe man ought to uſe in things of greateſt Conſequence, and ballance the Account of what they have got by their Debaucheries, with the Miſchiefs they have brought on themſelves and others by them, they will ſoon ſee what a mad Bargain they have made. Some Diverſion, Mirth, and Pleaſure is all they can promiſe themſelves; but to obtain this, how many Evils are they to ſuffer? how have many waſted

their strength, brought many Diseases on their Bodies, and precipitated their Age in the pursuit of those things? and as they bring old Age early on themselves, so it becomes a miserable state of life to the greatest part of them; *Gouts*, *Stranguries*, and other Infirmities, being severe Reckonings for their past Follies; not to mention the more loathsome Diseases, with their no less loathsome and troublesome Cures, which they must often go through, who deliver themselves up to forbidden Pleasure. Many are disfigur'd beside, with the marks of their Intemperance and Lewdness, and which is yet sadder, an Infection is derived oftentimes on their Innocent, but unhappy Issue, who being descended

ſcended from ſo vitiated an Original, ſuffer for their Exceſſes. Their Fortunes are profuſely waſted, both by their neglect of their Affairs, they being ſo buried in Vice, that they cannot employ either their Time or Spirits, ſo much exhauſted by Intemperance, to conſider them; and by that Prodigal Expence which their Luſts put them upon. They ſuffer no leſs in their Credit, the chief mean to recover an intangled Eſtate; for that irregular Expence forceth them to ſo many mean ſhifts, makes them ſo often falſe to all their Promiſes and Reſolutions, that they muſt needs feel how much they have loſt, that which a Gentleman, and Men of ingenuous tempers do ſometimes

prefer even to life it self, their Honour and Reputation. Nor do they suffer less in the Nobler powers of their Minds, which, by a long course of such dissolute Practices, come to sink and degenerate so far, that not a few, whose first Blossoms gave the most promising Hopes, have so wither'd, as to become incapable of great and generous Undertakings, and to be disabled to every thing, but to wallow like Swine in the filth of Sensuality, their Spirits being dissipated, and their Minds so nummed, as to be wholly unfit for business, and even indispos'd to think.

That this dear price should be paid for a little wild Mirth, or gross and corporal Pleasure, is a thing of such imparalelled

Folly,

Folly, that if there were not too many ſuch Inſtances before us, it might ſeem incredible. To all this we muſt add the Horrours that their ill Actions raiſe in them, and the hard ſhifts they are put to to ſtave off theſe, either by being perpetually drunk or mad, or by an habitual diſuſe of thinking and reflecting on their Actions, and (if theſe Arts will not perfectly quiet them) by taking Sanctuary in ſuch Atheiſtical Principles as may at leaſt mitigate the ſowrneſs of their thoughts, though they cannot abſolutely ſettle their Minds.

If the ſtate of Mankind and Humane Societies are conſidered, what Miſchiefs can be equal to thoſe which follow theſe Courſes.

Courses. Such Persons are a Plague where ever they come; they can neither be trusted nor beloved, having cast off both Truth and Goodness, which procure Confidence and attract Love: they corrupt some by their ill Practices, and do irreparable Injuries to the rest; they run great Hazards, and put themselves to much trouble, and all this to do what is in their power to make Damnation as sure to themselves as possibly they can. What Influence this has on the whole Nation is but too visible; How the Bonds of Nature, Wedlock, and all other Relations are quite broken. Vertue is thought an Antick Piece of Formality, and Religion the effect of Cowardise or Knavery: These

are

are the Men that would Reform the World, by bringing it under a new Syſtem of Intellectual and Moral Principles, but bate them a few bold and lewd Jeſts, what have they ever done, or deſigned to do, to make them be remembred, except it be with deteſtation? They are the Scorn of the preſent Age, and their Names muſt rot in the next. Here they have before them an Inſtance of one who was deeply corrupted with the Contagion which he firſt derived from Others, but unhappily heightened it much himſelf. He was a Maſter indeed, and not a bare trifler with Wit, as ſome of theſe are who repeat, and that but ſcurvily, what they may have heard from him or ſome others,

others, and with Impudence and Laughter will face the World down, as if they were to teach it Wiſdom; who, God knows, cannot follow one Thought a ſtep further than as they have conned it; and take from them their borrow'd Wit and their mimical Humour, and they will preſently appear what they indeed are, the leaſt and loweſt of Men.

If they will, or if they can think a little, I wiſh they would conſider that by their own Principles, they cannot be ſure that Religion is only a Contrivance, all they pretend to is only to weaken ſome Arguments that are brought for it: but they have not Brow enough to ſay, They can prove that their own Principles are true.

So

So that at moſt they bring their Cauſe no higher, than that it is poſſible *Religion* may not be true. But ſtill it is poſſible it may be true, and they have no ſhame left that will deny that it is alſo probable it may be true; and if ſo, then what mad Men are they who run ſo great a hazard for nothing? By their own Confeſſion it may be there is a God, a Judgment, and a Life to come; and if ſo, then He that believes theſe things, and lives according to them, as he enjoys a long courſe of Health and quiet of Mind, an innocent relliſh of many true Pleaſures, and the Serenities which Vertue raiſes in him, with the good Will and Friendſhip which it procures him from others; So when he dies, if theſe things prove

prove Miſtakes, he does not out-live his Error, nor ſhall it afterwards raiſe trouble or diſquiet in him if he then ceaſes to be: But if theſe things be true, he ſhall be infinitely happy in that State, where his preſent ſmall Services ſhall be ſo exceſſively rewarded. The *Libertines* on the other ſide, as they know they muſt die, ſo the thoughts of Death muſt be always Melancholy to them, they can have no pleaſant view of that which yet they know cannot be very far from them: The leaſt painful *Idea* they can have of it is, that it is an extinction and ceaſing to be, but they are not ſure even of that. Some ſecret Whiſpers within make them, whether they will or not, tremble at the Apprehenſions

henſions of another State; neither their Tinſel-Wit, nor ſuperficial Learning, nor their impotent Aſſaults upon the weak ſide as they think of Religion, nor the boldeſt Notions of Impiety, will hold them up then. Of all which I now preſent ſo lively an *Inſtance*, as perhaps Hiſtory can ſcarce parallel.

Here were parts ſo exalted by Nature, and improved by Study, and yet ſo corrupted and debaſed by Irreligion and Vice, that he who was made to be one of the Glories of his Age was become a Proverb, and if his Repentance had not interpoſed, would have been one of the greateſt Reproaches of it. He knew well the ſmall ſtrength of that weak Cauſe, and

and at firſt deſpiſed, but afterwards abhorred it. He felt the Miſchiefs, and ſaw the madneſs of it; and therefore though he lived to the ſcandal of many, he died as much to the Edification of all thoſe who ſaw him; and becauſe they were but a ſmall number, he deſired that he might even when dead yet ſpeak. He was willing nothing ſhould be concealed that might caſt Reproach on himſelf, and on Sin, and offer up Glory to God and Religion. So that though he lived a hainous Sinner, yet he died a moſt exemplary Penitent.

It would be a vain and Ridiculous Inference, for any from hence to draw Arguments about the abſtruſe Secrets of Predeſtination; and to conclude

clude that if they are of the number of the Elect, they may live as they will, and that Divine Grace will at ſome time or other violently conſtrain them, and irreſiſtably work upon them. But as St. *Paul* was called to that Eminent Service for which he was appointed, in ſo ſtupendious a manner, as is no warrant for others to expect ſuch a Vocation; So if upon ſome ſignal Occaſions ſuch Converſions fall out, which, how far they are ſhort of Miracles, I ſhall not determine, it is not only a vain but a pernicious Imagination, for any to go on in their ill ways, upon a fond Conceit and Expectation that the like will befal them: For whatſoever Gods extraordinary dealings with

some may be, We are sure His common way of Working is by offering these things to our rational Faculties, which, by the assistances of His Grace, if we improve them all we can, shall be certainly effectual for our Reformation; and if we neglect or abuse these, We put our selves beyond the common Methods of Gods Mercy, and have no reason to expect that Wonders should be wrought for our Conviction; which though they sometimes happen, that they may give an effectual Allarm for the awaking of others, yet it would destroy the whole design of Religion, if men should depend upon or look for such an extraordinary and forcible Operation of Gods Grace.

And

And I hope that thoſe who have had ſome ſharp Reflections on their paſt Life, ſo as to be reſolved to forſake their ill Courſes, will not take the leaſt encouragement to themſelves in that deſperate and unreaſonable Reſolution of putting off their Repentance till they can ſin no longer, from the hopes I have expreſs'd of this Lords obtaining Mercy at the laſt; and from thence preſume that they alſo ſhall be received, when they turn to God on their Death-Beds: For what Mercy ſoever God may ſhew to ſuch as really were never inwardly touched before that time; Yet there is no reaſon to think that thoſe who have dealt ſo diſinguouſly with God and their own Souls, as deſignedly to put off

their turning to Him, upon ſuch Conſiderations, ſhould be then accepted with Him. They may die ſuddenly, or by a Diſeaſe that may ſo diſorder their Underſtandings, that they ſhall not be in any capacity of Reflecting on their paſt Lives. The inward Converſion of our Minds is not ſo in our power, that it can be effected without Divine Grace aſſiſting. And there is no reaſon for thoſe who have neglected theſe Aſſiſtances all their Lives, to expect them in ſo extraordinary manner at their Death. Nor can one, eſpecially in a Sickneſs, that is quick and critical, be able to do thoſe things that are often indiſpenſably neceſſary to make his Repentance compleat: And

even

even in a longer Diſeaſe, in which there are larger Opportunities for theſe things; Yet there is great Reaſon to doubt of a Repentance begun and kept up meerly by Terrour, and not from any ingenuous Principle. In which, though I will not take on me to limit the Mercies of God, which are boundleſs; Yet this muſt be confeſſed, that to delay Repentance, with ſuch a deſign, is to put the greateſt Concernment we have upon the moſt dangerous and deſperate Iſſue that is poſſible.

But they that will ſtill go on in their Sins, and be ſo partial to them, as to uſe all endeavours to ſtrengthen themſelves in their evil Courſe, even by theſe very things which the Provi-

dence of God ſets before them, for the caſting down of theſe ſtrong holds of Sin: What is to be ſaid to ſuch? it is to be feared, that if they obſtinately perſiſt, they will by degrees come within that Curſe, *He that is Unjuſt, let him be Unjuſt ſtill: and he that is Filthy, let him be Filthy ſtill. But if our Goſpel is hid, it is hid to them that are loſt, in whom the god of this World hath blinded the Minds of them which believe not, leaſt the Light of the Glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, who is the Image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them.*

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